4
Honobono lokidoki
Serious soshite
Harem
デスマーチからはじまる
異世界狂想曲
Death March kara Hajimaru
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Part 1 - To the Hometown of the Dwarves

Satou's here. When I was on business trip, I sometimes caught sight of people who was transferring for job getting sent off on the platform for the bullet train.

I wonder how does it feel to get sent off like that? I've thought of such thing, but when I actually experience it, it doesn't feel bad at all.

◇

"Are you leaving no matter what?"

Viscount Nina who has come to see us off tries to detain me.
Behind her, more than 20 servants and maids have also come.

The maids aren't wearing the plain uniforms they've worn two weeks ago, but frilly maids clothes that one usually sees in Akihabara. Even though the skirt cover down to the ankle, it's still incomparably cuter than before.
Of course the mastermind is Arisa. Somehow the budget for it hasn't come from the baron but from my pocket instead, but if this is the result then I can consent.
However, even though I've heard that it would be completed in spring, it's done already. It might have touched the heartsrings of the tailor. Cute is justice they say.

By the way, it's early morning right now, the sun has just risen on the horizon.
To be honest, I didn't expect that they would come for the farewell like this.

I could see Pochi and Tama receiving something from lady Soruna at the edge of my view. Looks like the thing that entered their small purses are sweets.

As for the other, the men like the Baron, Hauto, and Zotol have also come.

Lady Karina isn't here.
I've asked the maid who's attending her room not to wake her up. Since she's always attacking me every day during the past two weeks here, I want to avoid troublesome thing when we're departing.

More than that, the maids that have been creeping up on me since awhile ago are scary.
Everyone folds their arms and stare at me with teary eyes.

Er~rr?
No one is going to start a fight right?

"Chevalier-sama, please don't go."

Without hesitation, a slender red-haired maid steps up and shouts while clinging to me.

I'd love a bit more volume, regrettable.

Starting with that girl, the maids begin to cling on me in turns.
Kuh, the maids with loli bodies are too fast, I've lost my chance to get in contact with the maids with superb volumes.
Arisa kicks me from behind while saying, "Stop grinning.", but I ignore her.

"Chevalier-sama, please stay here forever."
"That's right, if chevalier-sama is gone, who would make crepes."
"Rather than crepes, I want karaage again!"
"Leave only Pochi-chan here~."
"What are you saying, Tama-chan is cuter right."
"Better yet, become my husband and make meals for me forever please."

Even though I don't think it's because I'm popular, everyone are aiming for foods, or Pochi's and Tama's cuteness huh.

Oh?

Since I feel familiar sensations on my legs, I drop my line of sight--

It's Pochi and Tama. What are they doing hugging my legs?
The twos look up with sparkling eyes. I wonder if they're thinking some new play like Oshikura Manju?

"Everyone! I understand your reluctance, but don't trouble chevalier-sama."
"That's right, we have pound cakes made by chevalier-sama in the dining room. You can eat it after you've done your morning works."

The head maid claps her hands, and the maids step back.
Then after the chef's remark, they fall back as if pulling tides. It's a bit lonely.

"You haven't eaten breakfast right? It can't be compared to chevalier-sama's creation, but please eat this if it's fine with you."
"Thank you very much. I gratefully accept."

I pass the bento I've received from Chef-san to Lulu on the wagon.

"Really, won't you at least leave Arisa-dono here."
"No can do~ I can't live if I'm not beside darling."

Who's darling!
I ignore Arisa's careless remark, and say may farewell to Nina-san and the baron. I've received letters of introduction for nobles on various cities from Nina-san. I've also been asked to deliver several letters for influential nobles from Nina-san.

"I'll come back here after 1-2 years of training in the labyrinth city."
"Yes, we'll be waiting. At that time, we'll get territory rebuilt so we can return the money we've borrowed from you even for a little."
"Yes, I'm expecting it."

"I sincerely ask you to take care of Pochi-kun and Tama-kun."

The baron is giving off atmosphere as if he's sending his daughters for wedding. He's way too entranced by the cuteness of the two.
The debt that Nina-san talks about is 250 gold ingots that I've lent for rebuilding the territory. It's not enough to completely rebuild it with this, but it'd be usable for operating funds. The reason why I use ingots is because it'd look like hidden assets. I made it by crushing large quantity of gold coins. Since they were doubting where it came from, I showed them the magic bag <<Holding Bag>> and explained it. I told Nina-san that I was heading to the labyrinth city for the sake of Liza's and the others' training.

Liza and the others are already riding the horses, so I get in the wagon.
We leave the Muno castle behind while waving back to the people who keep on waving here.

◇

Now then, even though there have been various things happening during this two weeks, the one that's immediately apparent is this wagon.

I was allowed to freely use the workshop left from the marquis era, so I remodeled the wagon as much as I wanted to. I mainly tried to remodel the suspension system by strengthening the shock absorption. Unfortunately, I couldn't make anything fancy for the shock absorption.
The wagon is now pulled by four horses, increased from two before, so I'm expecting speed increase. Especially since the horses that Mia and Tama have ridden have leveled up are now pulling the wagon, it would be more effective.

For the sake of avoiding thieves, Liza and Nana wear armors and ride the horses. The baron has given a horse for Nana from the same species that Liza is riding, Shuberien. The full plate armors that the two wear are my creations. When I was taking Nana's size, there were some lucky situations that arose, but Mia hindered them all. I think Mia's intuition is too good.

Needless to say, the reason why the ones riding the horses are not Pochi and Tama is because they're too short, they'd look like children from afar, and that'd invite thieves rather than repelling them.

Mia is riding a horse.
The reason is the horse that Mia is riding itself. In truth, it's not a horse, it's a unicorn that has been sold illegally on the black market.

Even in this world, unicorns are being sold for their horns since they're effective medicines for all kind of sickness. I saved this unicorn when it was going to to be sold to people with eccentric taste in food after it got its horn cut.

The business of selling unicorns is forbidden in the entire Shiga kingdom, not just in baron Muno territory.

I wanted to return it to the place where other unicorns were with Mia, but since it didn't have horn, it couldn't get accepted into the herds.

The horn is seen as a recovery item by other races, but for unicorn itself, it's an important organ. Without the horn, an unicorn is not only unable to use its race-specific abilities, but it also loses the way to communicate to its friends. According to the indication from AR, unicorns are not monsters but belong to mythical beasts category.

Even the baron administrative was troubled with it, but since the unicorn got attached to our Mia right from the beginning, Mia began to gradually take care of it. We'll take it to Bornean forest together with Mia, and let it live in peace there.

"Lulu, I'll change your place as the coachman."
"Don't do that, master has become a noble, so when we're at the place where other people could see, master should let the servant to be the coachman."

Since I get scolded by Lulu, I give up on being the coachman and sit beside her. It's cute that she's still holding the rein properly even while scolding me.

"The flirting guy is here huh~"

As if estimating the right time, Arisa snuggles on my waist while protesting in monotone voice. Furthermore, she purposely puts her face between me and Lulu.

"Oh Arisa, burned with jealousy are you."

Lulu pats Arisa's hair while smiling.
There, Pochi and Tama climb on Arisa as if flattening her.

"Ugeh."
"Flirt~?"
"Prohibited nano desu."

The two are probably happy because it's been awhile since it's only us together.

"Prohibited."

Mia who's riding the horse on the side poke my shoulders while sulking a bit, probably because she's lonely.

The wagon gets out of the Muno city and head toward the highway.
We're speeding up from there. Since we've been going slow in the city, now the wagon advances close to three times faster.
The leveled-up horses speeding up the wagon don't bring only good things. The countermeasure I've made for the vibration goes to waste.

"Au, the vibration is harsh."
"Even though it's quite better than before, it's still too harsh I guess? Lulu I'll take your place,

so you can sit on the Float Seat with Arisa."
"But."
"You don't have to be reserved, it's alright."
"Yes, I understand."

Float Seat is a chair made with magic circuit that have properties of opposing magnets. On top of having low weight limit, it also needs to be recharged with magic power every 30 minutes, so it couldn't be used on the wagon's body. It still needs some improvements.

If I could downsize it a bit more, I could use it on the coachman's seat.

"Fuh, I'm revived."
"My bottom isn't hurt, but I feel nauseated."
"I'll give you medicine if you feel sick, so say if you are."
"Yes."

In exchange of the two who are sitting on the back seat, Pochi and Tama sit beside me.

"Next to master~?""Nano desu."

Come to think of it, since we were busy with various things when we were in the baron territory, we hadn't been together much beside the time when we were sleeping. I decide to pamper the two until they're satisfied today.

◇

The wagon gets out of the baron territory four days later.
During that time, thieves showed up on the radar, but their scout only loitered around without attacking us even once. So having cavalries outside does help after all.

Our route is not to the capital of Oyugock dukedom, but the slightly off-course self-governing dominion of the dwarves.
The self-governing dominion is inside Oyugock dukedom, about four days away from baron Muno territory.

Of course, our purpose is sightseeing.
It'd wasteful to avoid the live townscape of the dwarves so, might as well.

Incidentally, there's also the matter about the letter that viscount Nina has asked me to deliver.

After advancing through the highway located beside a river with reddish-brown water, we arrive at the hometown of the dwarves.

Part 2 - At the Hometown of the Dwarves (1)

Satou's here. I remember getting surprised at the fact that even the dwarven women have beard on the first fantasy novel I've read.

I'm not also sure about the loli dwarves from the recent days, but it'd be troubling if I have to choose between them and bearded dwarven women.

◇

Dwarves are typically said to live in caves, but from the information I've collected with All Map Exploration, about half of them live normally in the fortress. The other halves are exactly like that typical impression, they're living on the caves next to the city.

This self-governing dominion of the dwarves isn't that wide. It's a valley of around 20 kilometers wide in radius. Inside the dominion, there's a city called Bollhart, and two villages. The city has population of 30 thousands people, there are 20 thousands dwarves with the levels averaging at 5-6, four thousands ratmen, two thousands rabbitmen, two thousands humans, one thousands weaselmen, and the other 1000 are other demi-humans. There is no elf. I wonder if they're in bad term?
There are a lot weaselman and human merchants from what I see on their occupations and skills.

There are about 10 people who are higher than level 40 among the dwarves. The highest leveled one is a dwarf called Dohar. If I'm not mistaken, he's the dwarf that makes Toruma (Ossan)'s dagger. His level is 51. As expected of dwarves. There are a lot of veterans.

There is no demon, transported or reincarnated person. Looks like it would be peaceful this time.

There are fields around the city, but the ones who're plowing them are not dwarves, but ratmen, rabbitmen, and other various beastmen. Seems they're not exactly slaves.

We're joining the queue to enter Bollhart city at the front of the gate.
I stop the wagon at the end of the queue and wait for our turn.

"I think we're the 20th in line? There are quite a lot huh."
"That's right."

Arisa climbs up my body and look over the queue.
Someone is pulling my sleeves, when I look to the side, Pochi, Tama, and even Mia are waiting for their turns. Since my clothes would get wrinkled if they climb it, I put them on my shoulders. Since Mia is the only one who wears skirt, I don't put her on my shoulder, but instead, I hold her waist and raise her up.

"I'm against discrimination."
"This is not discrimination, but distinction. If you're wearing pants instead, I'd put you on my

shoulder."
"Mwuu."

Among the carriages that are waiting for their turn, about half of them are ridden by human.

"Pochi, Tama, keep your attention for any thieves on the back."
"A~ye."
"Roger nano desu."

Liza who had just come back from scouting the gate gave direction to Pochi and Tama.

"Master, weaselmen seem to be going in and out of this city. Please be careful since they're shrewd fellows."
"Yes, I understand. Thank you Liza."

If I remember correctly, weasel men tribe is the one who have destroyed Liza's village.

"Onii-san, won't ye buy potatoes? It's delicious see?"

A weasel woman is trying to sell potatoes with awkward words. Seems it's one copper coin each. Three times the market price. I wonder why am I hearing her like she has fake Chinese accent.

"Onii-san, this yakitori is more delicious than potatoes from that potato girl. I've put a lot of Bollhart salt see? They're three copper coins apiece."
"Mister, meat is better, the taste of the grilled mother frog from the mine basement will surely satisfy you."

Are those mother frogs alright to eat?
It smells nice, but we've just eaten so I turn down their offers. Pochi and Tama look a bit disappointed, but eating too much is bad for your health.

The ones who come to sell things to us that are waiting for our turns aren't only the weaselmen, but also ratmen, rabbitmen and children, however, I only look at the market price of those without buying them.

Mia who has bought something from the front comes back. She's eating something.

"Satou."

Mia presents the yellow stalk thing she's eating in front of my mouth, so I eat it.

Sweet.
It tastes like flower's nectar rather than sugar. It reminds me of the time when I suck up nectars on the roadside flowers during my childhood. Nostalgic.

"Aah!"
"Just now, it's an indirect kiss right?! then, next, is me."

Reproaching voices pour down from Arisa behind, and Lulu on the side.
Indirect kiss, we're not middle schoolers. No wait, Lulu is around that age huh.

Arisa extends her hand while coming here, but before she could, Mia nabs the stalk back. She quickly puts it in her mouth and shows V-sign toward here.
Since Arisa is making a noise, "Mukkii" behind, I want you to stop with the provocation. Look, even Lulu's eyes become teary.

Right at that time, a weasel person selling sweet stalks comes, so I buy it for everyone.
Somehow everyone made me hold the stalks in my mouth in turns, but I think I'd lose if I mind it.

◇

In the end, we're finally able to get inside after 10 minutes.

We get preferential treatment from dwarven soldiers who come to check on Liza's magnificent armor.

It looks like nobles get prioritized. Even though I'm just of the lowest ranking honorary noble, it still applies. When we're getting inside, I'm the only one who need to show my ID, while my companions don't. They only trivially look in the wagon, and don't investigate or ask for the tax for entering the city.

Is it a special privilege?
But then, like this, some unscrupulous nobles would be able to smuggle things.

The first time I see dwarves, they're as small, wide and stout as I've imagined. They're about 130cm high. The dwarven women are like dwarven men without beard version. Since they're not like the legal loli that often appear in recent games, I'm relieved. No more little girls.

◇

"Nice to meet you, Chevalier Pendragon. I've certainly received the letter from viscount Rottol. Is that courageous woman in good health?"
"Yes, she's taking the command energetically. You could call me Satou if it's fine with you."

I'm having a chat with Driar-shi, the mayor, after I deliver him the letter from Nina-san.
Liza and the others are relaxing in another room, but Arisa is here somehow. That Arisa is talking very formally, far from how she usually is, with Driar-shi.

"Driar-sama, as is written in the letter, we'd like permission for sending exchange students here."

Hoo, Arisa. This is the first time I've heard about that though? Arisa who has noticed my glance look at me with a face that's as if saying, "I didn't tell it?". I'll poke her forehead later.

"Fumu, I was taken care by viscount Rottol when I was studying on the royal capital. I can

accept if it's just a few exchange students."

Driar-shi answered while opening the letter. The lord of this self-governing dominion isn't this person, but his father, Dohar-san, is it alright to agree without his consent?

"It's alright, my father has entrusted me with the city unless it's a serious matter."

It seems to be alright. Good.
However, I think that the territory's technology is an important enough matter, or maybe they're taking stance of "If you can steal our technology, do it"?

"According to the letter, Satou-dono is doing blacksmithing, would you like to see our workshop if that interest you?"
"By all mean!"

Ooh, what a windfall.
Nina-san has done a good job.

◇

"This is the greatest blast furnace in this city."

It's a 20 meters high building.
There's also a window to put fuel coal below the furnace, half-naked dwarves and beastmen are throwing coals to it while getting themselves blacked. I could only see white smoke from the outside, I wonder how are they dealing with the dirty smoke? Well, there must be some sort of absurdity (fantasy) going on there.

"This is a wonderful facility."

My words are not flattery. The facility's scale isn't inferior compared to the ironworks I've seen in the previous world.
The people here are me, Driar-shi, and a dwarven woman who looks like a secretary. She's Jojori-san, Driar-shi's daughter. Arisa and the others have gone to the city after receiving letter for Nina-san. They're looking for a merchant who's going to Muno-city to deliver the letter.

We're observing from a place that looks like VIP seat, slightly away from the furnace. It's quite hot here, but it seems that it's still better than the place with insulation magic applied. It's hotter if we go outside.

According to Driar-shi's explanation, about 30% of the iron ingot used in Shiga kingdom are made here.

Next, we visit converter and pressure facilities successively. In the pressure facility, people who look like magicians are putting magic power into magic tool like thing in rotation. Everyone have dark circles under their eyes, looks like it's quite a hard labor. Originally, seems that there are more people here, but they've been dispatched on another level for

different matter, so now they're in shortage. Well, Um. Do your best. I cheer on the floundering magicians inside my heart.

There are no heavy machineries, but in exchange, about 3 meter tall people from the tribe called Little Giant are carrying ores, finished iron plates and steel materials around.

I wonder if the facilities for Mithril are secrets, they're not showing me it. It looks like it's in the underground caves.
I guess I'll ask about it.

"Are facilities related to Mithril located in the underground?"
"Y, you know your stuff. Did you hear it from viscount Rottol?"
"No, I've heard from a merchant acquaintance that the Mitrhil products from this town are wonderful."
"Is that so, I'd really love to show you there, but we need permission from my father if we want to visit the underground facilities."

Driar-shi folds his short arms while frowning. Seemingly unable to see Driar-shi's grimacing, Jojori-san gives a suggestion.

"Father, if that's the case, shouldn't you try to ask grandfather. Even if it's grandfather, he wouldn't tell a person he's just met to suddenly forge a sword."

Jojori-san, that's a flag I think.

Part 3 - At the Hometown of the Dwarves (2)

Satou's here. Ironworks often come up in drama or theatrical play, but isn't it not the case with light novel?

Even though the leading role usually does a lot of blacksmith-related things, it's strange.

◇

"Then let me see you forge a sword. We'll talk after that."

Jojori-san?
I look to her, but she averts her eyes.

We've come to elder Dohar's workplace after passing through less-than-one-and-a-half meter high tunnel. There are also numerous high leveled dwarves forging swords inside the room.
They're all good. Every sword's offense, sharpness, endurance and other parameters are 50% higher than the ones available in the city.

The word earlier was addressed to me after I introduced myself to him.

"Father, Satou-dono is an acquaintance of viscount Rottol, and--"
"Umu, I'm indebted to Nina, but this and that are different story. I can understand people's nature from how they forge swords. Zajir, heat up a mithril ingot."
"Uss, Shishou."

Driar interceded, but elder Dohar quickly proceeded with the trial.
The dwarf with gray beard, Zajir, offers me the seat before the prepared ingot and tools.
Well, since I've tried blacksmithing once in Muno city, I mostly understand the procedures, I'll try this once again. The skill is MAX anyway, I should be able to do it somehow.

I let the ingot to become red hot, and put it on the anvil. I gently strike it with the smith hammer.

Clink.

Huh? Something doesn't feel right?
Elder Dohar seems to have sensed my hesitation, he takes the hammer and similarly strikes the ingot. After hitting it once, he calls Zajir-san and punches Zajir on the head with his fist.

"Idiot, how many decades have you dealt with mithril. Haven't I told you to always be at the workshop when you're melting the ingot!"
"Uss, Shishou."

I don't really understand, but it seems that there's a problem with the ingot Zajir-san has prepared.

The slight sense of incongruity was because of that huh.

"Arright, let's go to the mithril furnace. Follow me, young 'un."
"Yes."

Looks like elder Dohar is going to guide me directly. I haven't forged a sword, but I've probably passed the test. Driar-san and Jojori-san are also following from behind. Zajir-san has gone earlier, I wonder if there's some kind of preparation.

I don't know what kind of furnace it'd be, but I'm going to enjoy it.

◇

The blast furnace for mithril is made from a metal that's strong against heat, Hihiirokane--something with Japanese-style name after a long while.

Zajir-san and other blacksmiths are making noise there, but everyone is lying down on the floor.

Apparently, this furnace is not fueled with coal, but with magic power in order to make it works.

Looks like the blacksmiths have ran out of magic power, and they're currently resting. Everyone here is a veteran with level higher than 30. Everyone has blacksmith and some kind of magic skills. The situation might be the same as the blast furnace above, with fewer people available than usual.

Apparently, they're waiting for their magic power to recover in two hours.
Elder Dohar's wrinkle become deeper and he's shouting, but there's nothing they can do without magic power. I wonder if he has also reached that conclusion, his argument turns here.

"Young 'un, since you're carrying short stick, are you a spell-user? If you're confident with your magic power, then put it into that furnace."
"Wait, father, don't make our guest act like your disciples."
"There's no problem if it's just magic power."

Driar objects, but I also want to look at the working furnace fast, so I gladly comply.

I put in my magic power.
I guess 200-300 MP should be enough?
It gets sucked rapidly. There's no response.

10.

20.

There's no lamp or some kind indication for when if it's enough, I guess I'll put the amount

at the level where the surrounding aren't going to be surprised.

100.

200.

300.

Oh, the fallen people's faces slightly change. I should stop here huh. 300 MP should be normal for a magician with slightly higher level than 30.
Still, seeing this reaction, wouldn't this able to accept 1000MP?

While acting like I'm wiping sweats that don't actually come out, I stop the infusion of magic power.

"Fuh, this furnace is amazing. Looks like it can still accept more."
"Umu."

Elder Dohar nods, and the surrounding people begin to move, the mithril refinery starts.

Jojori-san presents me sunglasses-like thing.

"Since it would hurt your eyes, please take this. Please don't stare at the fire even after you put it on."

I accept it while saying my thanks. It's pitch dark after I put it on. I could only faintly see the mithril furnace. As I stare harder.

>[Night Vision Skill Acquired]

I get the skill after all this time. After I activate it, I become able to see like normal even though I'm wearing sunglasses.

"I'm igniting it! Everyone, make sure to put yer' shade tools."

Uwah, this is dangerous. At this rate, there's no point in wearing the sunglasses.
I immediately close my eyes, but I'm late for an instant. White afterimage burned into my eyes.

>[Light Radiation Adjustment Skill Acquired]

Am I a robot! I activate it while cursing. I'd have liked this skill before it happens.
I open my eyes while feeling the self-recovery skill restoring my retina.

The temperature rises while the vermilion band around the furnace is mysteriously moving. Can you understand if I say that I'm seeing the inside of the furnace like with CT-scan? The AR indicates that the temperature reaches 3000 degree. The temperature of the ironworks that I've seen earlier is 1600 degree. Looks like mithril is substantially more resistant to heat.

"Umu, it's a nice vermilion."

I don't really understand, but elder Dohar seems to be satisfied while looking at the light leaking from the furnace.

Seems that the furnace could refine 100 kilograms of ingot in one go.
When the heat cools down, beautiful silver ingots with slight green tinge are completed.

Since this has taken quite a bit of time, Driar-shi has gone back to the city leaving Jojori-san here.

Elder Dohar sees the completed ingot, but then he suddenly raises his arm, and strike it with a small hammer, confirming the sound. He chooses several ingots that Zajir then carries.

"Young 'un, come here. I'll have you strike with phase hammer."
"Shishou, it's impossible for a human kid to use phase hammer."
"Noisy, don't butt-in my decision."

I wonder what's the original meaning of phase hammer that elder Dohar is saying.

"Young 'un, don't think you can sleep 'til morning. Jojori, meat, there's that smoked basilisk meat right. Bring it whole here. Let's fill our stomaches first."

Is Basilisk edible. Or rather, it's no good to not eat something that's been presented huh~

I ask Jojori-san who's going to go back to fetch food to bring message to Arisa and the others and arrange for their meal. Though, since they're going to stay in the guest mansion of the mayor, there's probably no problem.

◇

It's exactly a lump of iron--

Putting aside the joke, the great hammer that Zajir-san bring is an unrefined lump of metal. Looks like it's an alloy made from iron and mithril.

What the heck is this? It's being lifted lightly, but isn't this at least one ton heavy?

"What's wrong young 'un. If it's just that much, dwarves could lift it on one hand. Put out your spirit!"

Dwarves are amazing. This, with one hand huh.
Zajir-san actually lifts it on one hand. He's trying to appeal to Jojori-san, but she thoroughly ignores him. Needless to say, Dohar-san put his fist on Zajir-san who falls then.

It's not like I can't lift the great hammer, but since my body is light, it's hard to get the balance right. My balance shakes off several times as I'm learning. When I think about it, I might have not struggled if I just activate Transport skill.

While I'm learning to swing the great hammer, elder Dohar is checking the inside of the a jar that his disciples have brought.

"This is a bit weak. Bring out a stronger one."
"Shisou, we only have that for now."
"Then, have Ganza compound it."
"Ganza is having a meeting with the Gnomes, so he won't be back until tomorrow."

Elder Dohar looks like he's going to explode. It seems the blacksmiths use some kind of medicines. If I know the recipe I could compound it instead, but it's probably not something that could be taught to outsider.

"Jojori, anyone's fine, bring me an alchemist who could compound."

So sketchy.
If anyone's fine, then I'll step up.

"Dohar-sama, if anyone's fine, then shall I compound it?"
"Hn? You've done alchemy too huh. Yosh, then I'll leave it to you."

A prompt decision. Starting with Zajir-san, the disciples are becoming upset.
It seems they're not people who could say something directly face-to-face.

The recipe is hidden in an unexpected way. Instead of tablewares with the scales of the ingredients on the shelf, pots with raw material are lined up in accordance with the compounding order. Lastly, I have to finish it by putting it on the magic bestowing stand, but since the compounding is one of a kind, the setting is fixed.
I don't know the content of the jar, but thanks to [Analysis], [Appraisal] skills, and AR indicators, I've mastered the way to make [Secret Medicine of the Dwarves].

Elder Dohar checks on the medicine I've made, and then nods seriously.

"Good work. Let's boot Ganza out and have you replace him."

I'm not hearing elder Dohar's joke.

I follow elder Dohar to a different blacksmithing room than the first one. There's a small furnace made from hihiirokane inside. This one is for melting ingot, unlike the one for refining earlier. The anvil is also made from iron and mithril alloy. I wonder what's the liquid used for cooling called [Dwarf Water].
Zajir-san answers normally when I ask him. It's a 3:1 mixture of oil and spirit. I refrain myself from retorting, like 'it's more like [Dwarf Oil] rather than [Dwarf Water]', since the mood has become a bit tense.

"The preparation is complete."
"Yosh, let's do it."

Looks like it's quite an honor to help elder Dohar's phase hammer strike, the gazes from the

surrounding disciples are painful.
If you have any complaint, I'd like you to tell it to elder Dohar.

I ignore the jealousy from the neighbors and concentrate here. I'll enjoy this rare chance of doing blacksmith together with a famous swordsmith.

Part 4 - At the Hometown of the Dwarves (3)

Satou's here. The sake is only after you've turned 20! It was the favorite phrase of my father when my middle school self accompanied him drinking after dinner. That phrase might have been unexpectedly important.

◇

The next morning, the sword is completed.
I've struck enough to see it on my dream.
The dwarf's secret medicine was used when the mithril was being heated up in the furnace. Since one of the ingredient is magic core powder, it might be for dwarf-style magic weapon. Looks like the system is different than magic weapon made with magic liquid.

"We finished without changing shift huh. If you're want to seriously train, come here anytime. Someone like you will surpass me immediately."

Bang, elder Dohar slams my back.
Guho. It's about as painful as Wagahai-kun's tail attack. If you don't mind the one on the receiving one, they could die you know?

"You're quite good for a human!"
"Agreed, aren't you actually a beardless dwarf?"
"I didn't think that anyone other than Dohar-shi could swing that great hammer until morning existed."
"You're very welcome anytime here."

Uun, I've just swung the great hammer until morning as instructed by elder Dohar, but it seems I've been approved by the dwarf blacksmiths. I'm happy and all, but the beardless thing is none of their business. It should grow in 5-6 years. ...Probably.

Elder Dohar has gone somewhere while carrying the completed sword, and the other dwarves go to get breakfast.
I wake up Jojori-san who's sleeping on the corner of the room and am also going to get breakfast together with her.

◇

After the breakfast, I was called to a hall near the basement. It seems that this place blows through two layers, it's four meter high until the ceiling.

"Try swinging it."

I receive the presented sword. Apparently, elder Dohar has added ornaments that also acts as an anti-slip on the sword.
The type of the completed sword is of double-edged bastard sword. It's only about 70-80% as heavy as swords made from iron. When I pick it on my hand, it feels a bit light. I think if

sword is too light, it wouldn't be as powerful though...

When I take a stance, it feels firmer than the sword I've made before. I wonder if the balance is good?
I could swing better with this.

I swing it lightly.
It feels nice.

I try to swing faster this time.
I could feel air resistance if it's a cheap sword, but, I don't feel one with this sword, just like with holy swords. Yup, it's a nice sword.

"Now, put in your magic power and try it."

Elder Dohar who has been watching me swinging sword gives me an additional order.
Since Magic Edge is quite a rare skill, I guess it's fine to just put magic power normally?

I put about 10 MP.
Ooh, it accepts magic power easily just like Liza's spear. As expected of a sword created by the dwarf master craftsman. It might also because of the ability of mithril.

Ripple-like green patterns appears on the surface of the sword. Seems that it's a characteristic of weapons made from mithril. When I put more magic power, it begins to leak out red light like Liza's magic spear.

It'd be bad if it break if I put too much magic power, so I stop at 50 MP.
Mysteriously, the sword gets heavier as it accepts magic power. At the first 10 MP, I've thought that it's just my imagination, but now it's obviously heavier. We haven't drawn magic circuit during the sword's creation, I wonder if this is a characteristic of mithril?
I've had doubt whether the great hammer could be smaller if it's made from mithril instead, but later I'm told that the magic power from mithril-made hammer could adversely affect the mithril of the weapon that's currently being made.

"Umu, you have good skill. Let's have a bout for a bit."

Elder Dohar says so while taking a battle-axe and readies himself. My crisis perception kicks in as soon as I see the battle-axe.
No wait, that's a cursed weapon right? I could see a nasty red aura on it you know?

>[Ghost Vision Skill Acquired]

Uwah, don't need it. I don't want to learn it at all now.
Although I've seen real undead several times already, putting aside monsters, please spare me the evil spirit kind.
Horror is a no no.

In the end, I'm made to exchange blows with elder Dohar until he's satisfied while my

thought is in another place like that.

Still, Dwarves are tough indeed. After pulling an all-nighter doing blacksmith, he's fighting for half an hour on top of it. Moreover, even though elder Dohar shouldn't have eaten breakfast yet, he's still energetic.

Even though I'm devoting myself to avoid his attacks as much as possible, he succeeds in seeing through it and grazes me several times. Even though I'm faster than him, I'm gradually running out of place to run to, just like a chess game, it's a curious experience. As expected of a veteran of many battles. Having a lot of real combat experience is amazing after all.

◇

Dohar-san hands his battle-axe to his disciple, Zajir-san, and walks toward me. He's not running out of breath even after moving that much, as expected.

"Show me the sword."

I give the sword to Dohar-san, and then after checking the blade for any chips, he swings it to confirm something.

"Nice arm. There's no chips, and the sword isn't distorted too."

Is he praising himself? I've thought that, but it seems that he's praising my sword skill instead.
I've tried to move as much as not to have my high skill level known, but he might've seen through it.

"You must've been training on sword since you're small. I don't intend to pry, but you don't look your age. One couldn't be that skillful before having at least 10 to 20 years of experience."

My age certainly doesn't match my appearance.

After elder Dohar stares at the sword he holds with both hands in silence, he begins to chant as if determined in something.

"Umu, ■■ Name Order.『Fairy Sword Trazayuya』."

That was dangerous, I almost let it slipped on my face. Poker Face is a really useful skill.
Is it fine to give that boorish straight sword, a name like 'fairy sword'? Mithril is also called fairy silver, so maybe he takes it from there.

"Is Dohar-sama familiar with Trazayuya-shi?"
"Umu, yer' know it too huh. It's an old story, but I've served the Sage-sama for a long time. This is the best sword I've made in my life, I've named it after the late Sage-sama just now."

It's not like he's shedding tears, but elder Dohar closes his eyes and falls silent.

After opening his eyes, he sticks out the sword to me in silence, and having taken by the momentum, I receive it.

"It's a sword formed by yer' cooperation. With your skill, that sword would probably consent too. Use it well."

Wait a minute, the market price shows [--]. The stronger magic swords also have [--] market price, so this one is about equal huh. This should be worth several hundreds gold coins, or maybe even more than a thousand.... As expected of the work of the master among dwarves.

After I receive it, Dohar-san lets out an awfully good smile and shouts.

"Today is a good day! We're drinking it off! Bring out all the barrels!"

◇

And then, the drinking banquet happen just like that.

The place remains as the one where I've had a bout with elder Dohar for half an hour.
There, the dwarven women are bringing large quantities of grilled slices of meat, dried nuts and fruits, and fish variants that are good to have with liquor.
Not losing to them, the dwarven men are bringing out large amount of liquor barrels. Half of it are ales, and the other half are distilled liquor it seems.

Jojori-san pours me drink while I'm sitting beside elder Dohar. The strong drink poured into the silver cup is a transparent liquor with faint reddish tinge, and seems to be quite strong when I tasted it on the edge of my mouth. In turn, it tastes quite nice, so it's easy to drink. It tastes like the Awamori that I've drunk in Okinawa long ago.

"Guhahahaha, you sure can drink."
"Drinking it raw straight even though you're young, this guy has a promising future."
"The human that look like master swordsman from before magnificently choked on it."

The dwarves from the blacksmith room earlier are gathered around elder Dohar. Unlike when they're blacksmithing, everyone is a good-natured person.

Unfortunately, I don't know if it's because of my status or level, I can't get drunk. After I drink, I feel like getting drunk for a bit, but then I sober up very quickly. It's hard to become so even after I discard the effect from poison resistance.

>[Alcohol Resistance Skill Acquired]

I don't want to activate this skill.

Liza and the others are invited to the banquet too.
Since it's been a day, at first I want to spoil Pochi and Tama, but it's only until we get to the table on the corner of the room filled with smoked and grilled meat from unusual monsters.

Nana and Mia are drinking fruit water on my sides. Mia is biting variety of nuts while leaning on me. She looks cute like a small animal. Lulu is unusually eating meat around lead by Arisa.

The dwarven craftsmen's conversation begin to liven up. Although, since the topics are about blacksmith or mines, I mainly take the listener's role. It seems that they employ gnome magicians to deal with cave-in or gases, but when they're not accompanied by one, they use scrolls. It's expensive, but it's nothing compared to their lives they say.
That kind of scrolls aren't sold on the magic shop above the ground, but on the magic shop at the entrance to the dwarf mine district. I'm taught the place to buy earth and wind magic. If they're selling it, I will definitely buy it.

◇

I had considered not to let Liza and the others drink, but since the dwarven old men insisted on letting them drank since it looked fun, I couldn't stop it.

"Ehehehe~ Satou. Fufuh~n Sa-Tou. Ahaha~, Satou♪"

Lulu is fully acting like a spoiled child, probably because she's taken off her sober face.
She looks like a merry drinker. When I take the cup from Lulu, she hugs me and begins to cuddle.

"Sniff, a person like me, it's alright to protect the membrane forever. I'll end alone in this world too."

Arisa is a downer, or rather, a maudlin drinker. I keep in mind as to not let Arisa drinks liquor.

『Kusukusu, it's fun, this is fun. Now Satou, go drink more. Ufufu, there are three of you, it's wonderful.』

Who the heck are you.

The always taciturn Mia talks furiously in elf language. It's a bit surprising.
It's fine that she's spinning around while looking so happy, but her skirt is going loose so I should stop her soon.

"Nihehe~ mas tar sa ara roresu."
"Nyuru~n."

Pochi's tongue isn't functioning well.
Tama curls up on my lap as if slipping and starts sleeping. When Pochi looks at it, she also gets on it.
Ah, she's already sleeping.

"Master, the condition of my logic circuit is unusual. This water has poison possibly, possibly, possibly?"

Dang, even Nana drank huh. She has become able to eat a bit of food since a week ago. I make Nana who's become like a broken record to drink a magic potion effective for hangover and put her to sleep.

Liza who has been drinking quietly beside me sleeps in sitting position.

I won't let these girls drink next time.
While I'm having such determination, the drinking festival continues late into the night.

>Title [Blacksmith of the Fairy Sword] Acquired.
>Title [Hard Drinker] Acquired
>Title [Heavy Drinker] Acquired
>Title [Heavyweight Drinker] Acquired
>Title [Friends of Dwarves] Acquired

Part 5 - At the Hometown of the Dwarves (4)

Satou's here. Turmerics are amazing. When I had to drink and got hangover after getting dragged to corporate parties, I always drank it.

◇

On the next morning, three little girls and one girl are suffering from hangovers.

"Kuah, my head hurts. Uuh, it's blurry."
"Nyuu~."
"Ouch.....Nodesu."
"Satou, medicine."

Of course, Nana who has drunk medicine yesterday is fine, but even Liza and Lulu are alright too.
Lulu is handing water for everyone. When my eyes meet with Lulu, she turns red and looks down. I am not so uncouth as to quip shameful sight of a drunken person, but since it's cute, I'll leave her like that.

I make everyone drinks the same potion that Nana has drunk.
The effect of the potion is splendid, everyone who has been groaning since a while ago quickly gets back to their usual self and begins saying that they're hungry. I better not ask if they remember about yesterday. Particularly Arisa and Mia.

Since Jojori-san has come for us, we're going to the dining room. Come to think of it, even though elder Dohar and Jojori-san are the ruling family of this town, they're eating in the same room as the craftsmen and the blacksmiths. I wonder if dwarves see themselves as family?
Elder Dohar in the dinning room has already decided to have a drink in the morning. The meat in front of him is the same one we've eaten yesterday, the basilisk meat. It does taste good, but the smell is too strong and I can't exactly say that I like the flavor. I prefer something a bit more plain.

He's only noticed that Mia who has taken off her hood for the meal is an elf. It seems that I'm narrow minded with my worry, dwarves and elves don't have bad relationship.

"Hoo, the girl of Bornean forest eh. I've heard that you're missing, but you're actually eloping with a human huh?"
"Nn. Mutual love."

Don't say that scandalous thing. It's unfounded.

"I've saved her from a bad magician, and she's going to tag along until the forest."
"Mwuu."

It seems she's dissatisfied with the mutual love declaration being torn off.

"Since we've got request to search her from Bornean Forest's Senate, do you mind if we send them letter to report this?"
"Yes, I'm sorry troubling you."

Driar-shi, the mayor, arranges the letter instead of elder Dohar.
The worker's guild manager in Seryuu city should have sent a letter, but since, there's no guarantee that the letter will arrive, unlike the post office's registered mail, there's probably no problem even if there are many of them.

◇

I'm bringing everyone to go on a sightseeing tour of Bollhart city today, since yesterday I've left them unattended. They've already replenished the consumables yesterday. As expected.
Looks like Jojori-san has deliberately voluntereed to guide the sightseeing. It feels like we're VIPs.

First, we're going to the magic shop I'm taught yesterday.

"I'm sorry Satou-sama. I can't take people who don't have permissions from grandfather to the magic shop before the mine. There's no problem with Satou-sama, but I have to ask the other honored guests to wait here."

We're going on a tour together!　Or so I've thought but it's already running aground.
Things won't change even if I trouble Jojori-san, so I decide to ask everyone to wait here and finish my business quickly.

The magic shop, Don-Haan, is beyond the passage after the open-space above the furnace for mithril-making yesterday. I see, I can understand why it needs elder Dohar's permission if it's here.
Per Jojori-san's request, I put the fairy sword we've made yesterday on my waist. I've made the sword belt myself from when I'm making something for Nana back then. The sheath has been made in hurry, literally before the breakfast today. It's a plain simple sheath with wood as the base. I'm thinking of making more proper sheath some other day.

"Yo, Jojori, have you fallen for a human? Zajir will cry y'know."
"Oi, Jojori, what are you doing bringing a human here. Oya-san will knock you out y'know?"

Twin small old men greet us inside the magic shop. They're gnomes, not dwarves.

"Hello, old man Don, and old man Haan. I've gotten permission from grandfather."

Jojori-san says so while pointing to the pommel of my fairy sword. Since the gnomes ask to look at it better, I take it off the sword belt and put it on easy-to-see place.

"This is, I'm surprised. If this isn't True Mark of Oya-san."
"Dang surprising. Did Oya-san make this as a joke after drinking too much?"

It seems that True Mark is like the signature of Dohar-san, and he doesn't usually put it on

commonly made things. If I show this True Mark to the dwarves and gnomes of this self-governing dominion, I'd be treated like an old friend. Elder Dohar... you're too nice to a youngster you've just meet yesterday.

For the time being, since I could buy anything in the shop thanks to the True Mark, I decide to see magic books and scrolls in this shop.
This is also an alchemy shop, but they're only selling finished products, and there's no compounding tools or materials for sale.

"Right eh, we have lower grade magic books for water, wind, ice and fire magic, while the intermediate grade magic books are for earth and fire. There are also unusual stuffs like blacksmith magic and mountain magic."

Don-san is piling up magic books.
This is the first time I've heard blacksmith magic, but it's just magic arranged for blacksmithing purpose, it looks like it's usable with fire magic skill. It's the same with mountain magic, it's just arrangement of magic for searching and digging out minerals in the mine, it seems to be usable with earth magic skill. I'm also advised that magic from other elements are necessary too, although there are only few.
I've bought the lower grade magic books from human towns, but since I see some unfamiliar spells in them, I buy them all. Since we can't carry it, it's decided to get it delivered along with their stock delivery.

"Hoo? Scrolls eh? We do have scrolls, but they're only expensive things for people who could use magic themselves, the effects are very light y'know?"

Haan-san takes the scrolls from the shelves here even while warning me like that. It seems that there are only six kinds of scrolls here.

"They're insurances for miner who's going solo to the mine. To crush rock so that it becomes sands, [Rock Smasher], for when water comes up [Freeze Water], and [Hard Clay], also, for reinforcing brittle bedrocks [Mud Wall (Wall)]. There are also [Air Cleaner], and [Air Curtain], for breaking through place with strange gas."

Of course, I tell him that I'll buy it all, but Don-san halts me.

"I'm sorry lad. I insist that you hold back on [Air Cleaner]. There's only one of that left. I want to keep it in stock until we restock next month."
"If it's like that, I'm fine with the other five."

It's regrettable, but it's not something I want at the expense of the dwarves. Moreover, it looks like the scrolls here are bought from the Toruma (Ossan)'s household, so I'll probably get it anyway when I get to the dukedom's capital.
The scrolls I've gotten are as follow.

>Scroll, Earth Magic: Rock Smasher
>Scroll, Earth Magic: Mud Wall (Wall)
>Scroll, Earth Magic: Hard Clay

>Scroll, Wind Magic: Air Curtain
>Scroll, Ice Magic: Freeze Water

◇

After finishing the purchase in the magic shop Don-Haan, I sally forth to the city with everyone.
At first, Pochi and Tama are dangling on both of my hands, but Mia and Arisa begin to complain. In the end, they've calmed down after they're alternating holding my hands in turns for each street, the turns are decided with rock-paper-scissor.

Oh? Once we begin to walk, I notice that there are people following us.
They're dwarves when I check on the map, or rather, they're people from Bollhart public order bureau. According to Jojori-san, they're bodyguards that Driar-shi has prepared. It's not 'feel like', but we 'are' treated as VIPs.

At the center of the square with water fountain, there are swordsman who's sword dancing, grinder shop, and people selling weapons openly.
The commodities are put on the sheet on the ground, unlike with stands like in Seryuu city. Although it's not like the displayed items are bad, they're also not especially good so I'm not interested.

There's a weaselman street vendor who's opening a play with target on the square. It seems that you have to hit a target 3 meter way with darts that look like shuriken. A session is one copper coin, and you'd get three pennies for each one of the five shurikens hit. It's the customers' victory if they hit twice right, isn't that easy?

"How 'bout it bro. Would ye like to play?"

Since Pochi and Tama seem like they want to, I give him one copper coin.

"I'll hit with them all nodesu."

Pochi's first throw missed. It looks like the dart's balance is bad. No, seems that it's deliberately made to be unbalanced. Yet, she still hits twice, she does have throwing skill.

"I've hit twice nodesu!"
"Aiyaa, jou-chan is great really. I'd have to survive with rice if this keeps up."

I pat Pochi who looks pleased after she receives one copper coin and one penny. Her tail looks like it'd get torn off.

"Revenge for Pochi~?"

Everytime Tama throws the dart, the surrounding people cheer. She has hit it three times in a row.

"Oh, that little girl is besting the record."

"I'm betting for four hits."
"I'll bet that third will be the last."

They've begun betting, but Tama throws the fourth and fifth darts without minding the atmosphere.
Unfortunately, the fifth one misses, but she's amazing enough for hitting fours with darts made to miss.

"One missed."
"It's quite amazing already Tama."

She's wanted to hit with all the darts to the point that she forgets to ask for the prize. But, it seems that she pulls herself after I praise her. While she's rubbing her head on my hand after I've finished patting her, she triumphantly shows the copper coins she's gotten on her hand to Pochi.

Since Tama shows her two copper coins and two pennies, Pochi's rivalry is burning and she's going to challenge the play again, but the weasel man doesn't accept re-challenge from people who have hit the target for twice or more.

Everyone else have also challenged it, but beside Mia who hit once, no one hit even once. Even though Liza occasionally does spear-throwing practice, she's missed it all. Jojori-san encourages me to to try it, but I refrain.

◇

There aren't only weapons, armors, and other savage things that are on display on this square, various handiworks made from gems or precious metal are also lined up. Although they look finer than the ones in Seryuu city, I feel like they look a bit rougher than the one I usually see on the TV's CM.

Since we're already here, I suggest on buying one silver worth of handiworks for everyone, but--

"The things that master makes are better anyway. Please put plenty of your love in it."
"Meat~?"
"That's right nano desu, I want grilled meat nodesu."
"Steak is nice, but I think that roasted meat on net is better."
"Crêpes."

Arisa is asking for accessory, but starting from Tama, Pochi, then Liza, and even Mia are making noises for food.
Nana and Lulu who are looking at the accessories agree with Arisa and tell me that my self-made accessories are better. I could do it easily due to production skills anyway, I'll make some matching earrings or bracelets I guess?

Maybe they're hungry because they're talking about food, I decide to have meal on the restaurant that faces the square. Since I've been in the basement for a long time, I secure

the seat on the open terrace in front of the restaurant. When we're ordering the meal, Pochi says a very curious thing, "I wish to quickly go on a journey and eat master's meat nodesu." Somehow everyone sympathizes with Pochi's remark and nods, Jojori-san is showing a confused face as the only one who doesn't understand the situation.
The meal is black bread with cheese and sausage garnishes, and it's normal for the dwarves to pour these with ale. The sausage is minced, so I put mustard on it. It's mustard after a long time, and when I check on Lulu, it seems that she's bought various type of sausages and mustard. GJ.

◇

"Why aren't you selling mithril sword even though here is dwarves' hometown!"

When we're drinking ginger tea after the meal, I could hear such yelling. When I glance there, a man who's wearing noble-like clothes is complaining to a dwarf who's selling weapons on the street stall.
It looks like the peace is ending and the disturbance at the dwarves' hometown seems to begin.

Part 6 - At the Hometown of the Dwarves (5)

Satou's here. There are a lot of clearance goods that appear during deflation, but even in parallel world, those goods also exist.

◇

"You've heard what I said from awhile ago right mister? Even among dwarf blacksmiths, the only ones who could work on first class stuff like mithril are the personal pupils of the old master. An ordinary working-class dwarf like me only makes sword from normal iron at best. I don't do mithril."

The dwarf man who has been pressed for an answer declares so while shrugging his shoulder as if spitting it out.

"That can't be.... Then where should I buy it. I've especially come here from Gururian city."
"I dunno such thing even if you ask me."

It seems that even the dwarves don't know how to deal with the man who's lamenting exaggeratedly.

"There's a lot of people like that during this season. With the month changing in 8 days, the once-in-three-years martial tournament will open in the capital, so people are coming here looking for mithril weapons."

After explaining it, Jojori-san says, "I'll go for a bit", and goes to quell the dispute. There are a lot of hidden bodyguards, so she should be alright.
If the tournament is next week then I don't think that he'd make it in time, but since the preliminary is held in every city of the dukedom, it looks like it'll be alright. Unfortunately, the preliminary isn't happening in Bollhart city.

The guy is the fourth son of the viscount, level 6, has sword skill. I don't think that he could do well in the tournament even if he has mithril sword.

"Gobler-san, what seems to be the problem?"
"Ah, Jojori sis. These people insist on buying mithril swords."
"What's this? Are you selling it?"
"I'm very sorry, but mithril weapons are made by reservations. Moreover, it requires letter of introductions from duke-sama and viceroy-sama."
"What... you say, the I won't be able to get mithril sword..."

The noble man mutters and collapses onto the ground--he's fainted.
Judging from the states of his clothes and mantle, he's probably been through a long journey.

Jojori-san comes back while shouldering the man. As expected of a dwarf to easily carry a big grown man.
The cafeteria's caretaker comes out, and the man is laid on the bench at the corner of the

cafeteria. She sure is kind, it'd be fine to leave him on the shade of the tree over there.

"Looks like he's overworked. Among second son of nobles and below and fallen nobles, there are a lot of case where they collapse after arriving here in strict schedule."

It has become a tradition huh?
However, even if he use a mithril sword, I think it'd still be hard though?

The one who answers that doubt isn't Jojori-san, but a woman dressed in armor who seems to be the attendant of the noble man earlier. She's a 16 years old blond woman with childish face. Her eyebrows are big. I don't know her proportion due to the armor, but it looks relatively good. Her level is 7, she has one-handed sword and shield skills. It looks like she serves the viscount house.

"I'm sorry for the trouble young master has caused. We'd like to get mithril swords no matter what, isn't there any way?"
"Even if you say that. If you bring the raw material, the mithril ingot, yourself, then there would be several people who could help, but since they're reserved for the duke and the viceroys beside that, it's impossible."

The woman warrior is more constructive than the noble man from earlier, but Jojori-san's answer isn't favorable. By the way, the viceroys seem to be nobles who are governing cities beside the dukedom capital. It looks like the office's term ends in five years and the seat will be changed to a different person.
Still, if the system is so tied with reservations, I wonder if it's alright for me to receive such an excellent sword?
As the two's conversation is of no concern to me, I wipe Pochi's mouth which has gotten dirty from the meat soup, but the argument turns toward here.

"The personage there. I assume that your sword is made from mithril. It's an impudent wish, but would you be willing to hand it over?"
"I refuse."

She could know even without appraisal skill huh.
I've declined in a flash, but the woman warrior press on without giving up. But, even if I'm selling it, I don't think that they could pay the compensation.

"You won't sell it no matter what?"
"In the first place, you wouldn't able to pay it anyway you know?"
"We'll pay no matter how much, if we can't, I'll give you anything you want."

Everyone glances at my face with that words from woman warrior. No, I'm not thinking something perverted you know.

"Even if you say no matter how much, a dagger sized mithril cost 40 gold coins you know? For a straight sword of this size, it'd be at least 120 gold coins."
"Wha, even though an iron sword only costs one gold coins, one hund, 120 you say?!"

I think that iron sword is more expensive though, but when I check on the woman's sword, just as I thought, it's of poor quality. Still, it's bad for her to try to buy something if she doesn't even understand market price.
I'll give her a warning once again to make her give up.

"Even if you get yourself a mithril sword, you won't suddenly get stronger you know. Rather than coming here to buy one, you should use that time and labor to hunt monsters instead."
"It is not so. For the sake of entering the imperial guard of the dukedom, the young master needs either a mithril sword or a magic sword."

I ask for the detail since I don't quite understand the relation. According to her story, it seems that the people who possess mithril swords or magic swords are able to pass the first preliminary round. And then, there's a story circulating among the young nobles that if you clear the "People who participate on the second preliminary round" condition, you'd get accepted into the dukedom's imperial guards.

It seems that entering into the imperial guards is the most popular course to be successful in life beside being the first child, so the noble man earlier has participated in the martial tournament since he's 15 but he's never passed over the first preliminary round. It'd be the third time he's entering this year.

To be frank, I don't really care since it's a stranger's problem.
Since Liza's spear is wrapped in cloth, it's fine, but it'd be troublesome if she notices that it's a magic spear.

Yet, Arisa who has just finished her meal repulses the woman who's persisting.

"You're being rude to our master even though he's being humble you know? This person is a respected noble with peerage, Chevalier Pendragon-sama."

After hearing that, the woman says, "I earnestly apologize for my rudeness.", and lowers her head while turning pale. What's this, I should have show her my peerage from the start. As expected of Arisa.

"Please be careful as there are a lot of frauds who are selling weapons made from monsters as though they're magic weapons recently."

Jojori-san advises the woman warrior.
I don't have obligation to keep them company forever so when Liza and the others have finished their meal, I give them sign to leave.
After we leave, some weasel men that looks like merchants approach the woman, but I decide to not care about it. It's her own responsibility if she gets scammed after ignoring Jojori-san's advice.

◇

The magic shop above the ground is managed by Jojori-san's childhood friend. The product line-up seem to be inferior compared to the underground shop, but since it's in the middle of

the way to the waterwheel tourist attraction, I decide to visit it.

"Hey Jojori. That's unusual for you to come to this shop! Are you finally fed up with that muscle-brain idiot Zajir? That's good! That's really good."
"Hello Galhar. Please don't say such thing about Zajir-san."

Galhar-shi speaks like a machine-gun when he sees Jojori-san. Jojori-san lightly reproves that. Even though he's a dwarf, he's not exposing his stomach, and his beard is carefully set and waxed. Is he perhaps, a dwarf hunk?

Introduced by Jojori-san, I ask the magic shop to show me their magic books and scrolls, and although the magic books are mostly the same as the ones from underground magic shop, there are two books with different authors, so I buy them. The scrolls line-up is different, the ones here are suited for nobles and merchants.

"What do you think, I've deliberately stocked them from Daregan city. Aren't they unusual?"

He takes out some life magic scrolls.
They're insect repellent, anti-itch or deodorant, etc. Things that the wealthy would buy. There's even scroll for clean drinking unboiled water. Those scrolls are quite interesting, but I think the costs don't balance out.
Sure enough, when Jojori-san sees the line-up, her face becomes clouded.

"Hey, Galhar. How much are these scroll each?"
"Fufuhn, normally it would be 1 gold coin for one, but for you, I'm fine with giving it for 3 silver coins."
"These scrolls, perhaps they're not selling even one?"

Galhar-shi is boasting until his nose expands, but when he hears Jojori-san's words, his face freezes. Furthermore, Arisa delivers the decisive blow.

"That's right isn't it, rather than carrying around such expensive scrolls, it'd be more convenient to just hire an attendant who can use life magic instead, it's more effective financially too."

So it seems they're bad stocks that aren't selling at all ever since they're stocked half a year ago. With the support from the girls, I buy them cheaper than their stocking prices. Coupled with three other well-selling scrolls, the total becomes three gold coins.

The scrolls that I've obtained are as follow.

>Scroll, Life Magic: Bug Wiper
>Scroll, Life Magic: Anti-Itch
>Scroll, Life Magic: Deodorant
>Scroll, Life Magic: Pure Water
>Scroll, Nature Magic: Short Stun
>Scroll, Nature Magic: Sonar
>Scroll, Nature Magic: Fence

Beside Short Stun, they're all questionable magic, but I've bought them all since my collector's soul grows excited.
Galhar-shi brings more bad stocks from the back since he seems to have judged that I'd buy them. Looks like he's bought them from a weasel merchant at the neighboring city called Daregan.

"How about it? They're quite rare y'know."

They're certainly rare, maybe.

The first is [Nature Magic: Signal] which Nana also has, but it's useless since there's no one who could receive it. It's probably usable as beacon.

The second is [Nature Magic: Cube]. This is like a magic in between [Shield], and [Floating Board], the practitioner could create cubes of arbitrary size that float in the air.
It's mainly used to keep off rushing enemies, but it could also be used like a chair. On top of having short effective time, it would also disappear when it's separated away from the practitioner. It's not like it's completely still in the air as it'd move when it's overloaded. Looks like I could use it to create invisible stairs in the air.

I wonder if it's an unexpectedly usable magic?

"The lowest level cube is about this much see?"

Arisa creates a floating cube of about 10 centimeters wide in the air. Moreover, it seems that it could only hold 500 grams of weight. In case of scroll, since it could only invokes magic of the lowest magic, I understand why it becomes a bad stock.

The third is [Fire Magic: Furnace Flame]. It seems to be a magic for melting ores into ingots. It's actually a very dwarf-like scroll, but it couldn't even be used for melting iron core if there are less than 10 scrolls, it also needs strong vessel to use, and the melted iron will flow to the ground, so it's difficult.
Furthermore, the activation range is short, so the practitioner would get burnt, it's a defective product.
In short, it's better to just use normal furnace. Since there's no meaning for its own blacksmithing purpose, there's no demand for it at all. He's only noticed it after he's bought it.

"How did you end up with all these weird scrolls..."

Arisa and Mia looks amazed. Pochi and Tama are sleeping beside Liza's feet. They're tired after all huh.

"Y, you can use it as attack magic."
"If you attack with this, you'd only hurt yourself. Something like fire bullet is more efficient."

So it seems.

The last one is [Light Magic: Condense]. Galhar-shi desperately tries to sell it by saying things like you could use it for drying laundry during cloudy days, or you could use it to read in dim room. I'm told that he's mistaken it for [Luminescence(light)].

He seems to have thought that I would not buy it since it's been thoroughly disapproved by Arisa and the others, so he looks really dumbfounded when I begin negotiating.
Certainly, normally one would think that they're nothing but trashes, but as for me, I think that they look more attractive than the scrolls from the underground shop. With the help from Arisa and Jojori-san, I buy them all for dirt cheap one silver coin, far from even half the prices.

It was a good shopping.
I'm keeping in mind to sell him scrolls for cheap when I've become able to create scrolls my own someday.

◇

The great waterwheel that Jojori-san has lead us to is smaller than I've thought, but I'm glad that it looks like a tourist attraction.
Even though we've just eaten so much just now, everyone heads to the sweets stalls instead of the waterwheel. The stalls are selling famous specialty pastry around here in style of prawn chips. It seems that they're in promotion.

"Master, aan nano desu."

I get one baked sweet that Pochi is presenting to me. Arisa and the others who are queuing in front of the stalls are clamoring, but I taste the sweet without minding it. The taste and smell are like prawn chips.

While tasting that nostalgic flavor, we go around visiting blacksmiths from various tribes, starting from the dwarves, on the craftsman district, and then we go back to the guest mansion.

Evening of that day, losing to the pleading gazes of Pochi and Tama, I decide to stand in the kitchen. The dining room aunty who gives me permission turns out to be the wife elder Dohar. I've brought 20 type of meat from the wagon as ingredients, but it's not enough at all in the end. I've prepared many large plates, but after the dwarven blacksmiths are coming after getting enticed by the smell, the dining room becomes battlefield. The line of sights from Pochi, Tama and the dwarves who are seriously competing for the meat that look at me when I'm refilling the platters are scary.
Jojori-san is unable to remain indifferent to this, so she divides the children from the adults, but since the dwarf children have also come for the meat, the contest hasn't ended. Since friendships seem to be budding from the meat contest, I let it slide.

It wasn't until late in the night that Lulu, Nana, and me who have been refilling the meal were able to have meal ourselves.

Part 7 - Scrolls and Cheat

Satou's here. I'm reminded of Icarus when we're talking about flying human, but flying in the air has been everybody's dream since the olden days. In this world, people aren't flying with wax wings, but with magic.

◇

I'm told that the granddaughter of elder Dohar will be my wife if I stay, so I promise Zajir-san who glares at me when he hears that to part away, thus we leave Bollhart city behind.

The nearest city is four days away.
Since the path there is a mountain trail, it'll probably be five days.

There are several carriages going to the same direction as us, but since our speeds are different, we're not moving in caravan. It seems that normally, even if the moving speeds are different, many carriages join together to evade thieves, monsters and beasts.

Since we wouldn't be able to craft, experiment and do training if we're together with other merchants, I try not to intrude each other's turf as much as possible.
Even so, there are times when we meet them during the break, so I've put dummy barrels, boxes and various luggage around.

Currently, the coachman is Lulu. Arisa has installed a cushion on the driver's seat during our stay in the Bollhart city, so it looks comfortable now. It seems that the inside of the cushion seat contains coiled springs that she's asked the blacksmiths to make.

◇

Two days after we've left Bollhart city, the caravan of merchants aren't near our camping ground at last, so I decide to use the many scrolls that I've bought.

Before I use the scrolls, I finally activate the five kind of magic skills; Earth, Fire, Wind, Ice, and Light.

First I make a wall made from mud with [Mud Wall (Wall)]. It's a one meter tall, one meter wide, and five centimeters thick [Wall]. It looks like it'll collapse if it's just touched lightly.

Lulu and the others who are watching give an applause. Tama wants to climb it, but I warn her that it's fragile so she shouldn't.

Next, I harden the mud wall with [Hard Clay]. It's not glossy like a porcelain, but it's strengthened enough.

It seems that both the mud wall and the hardened wall would not return back to their original forms even with passing time. If I have a potter's wheel, I would be able to make pot for medicines. Come to think of it, I don't have Ceramic making skill yet, let's try it next time.

When I use [Rock Smasher] on the mud wall and the hardened mud wall, both of them break and become sand.

When I use [Freeze Water] on the water in the bucket, it freezes for three centimeters from the surface. Since it's winter now, it doesn't seem like it'd melt even if it's left alone. If I use it on a pond if we find one, we would be able to play on a skating ring made from it. I'll make skate boots while we're moving.

The [Air Curtain] could be used to make windbreak, but the effect disappear in about three minutes.

Since all the life magic I've tried have subtle effects, I'm omitting it. [Deodorant] seems to be usable for when I've moved my body like after training.
It's quite unpopular when I use it later. I've already expected the kind of Arisa's reaction, "Boy's sweats are proof of youth you know, and you're erasing that! erasing that!", but even Lulu looks really disappointed. When we're sleeping, even Pochi and Tama say, "There's no master's scent nodesu.", they rub their noses while putting on strange faces, so I decide not to use it except when I'm really stinky of sweats.

Next I try using [Condense]. It condenses the moonlight and it does get a bit brighter, but that's it. The magic tool Light Drop that hasn't had role recently is much brighter. No wonder it becomes a bad stock.

I use the other bad stock [Furnace Flame (Forge)] from a place away from everyone. I ask Mia to standby with a long stick for if the fire spread. I change into cheap shirt and trousers since I don't want my clothes get burned. Arisa is saying some stupid things from behind, "Shirt is way better than robe isn't it. That slender body line is irresistible."

I put a copper dagger I've got from the thieves back then on a rock and use the magic. The MP consumption is slightly bigger, maybe because this spell belong to intermediate class. Since the flame appears only one meter away from the scroll, I move it to the dagger's place in a hurry. Even though the copper dagger should have been more soluble than iron, it only gets hot and isn't melting. Since the nearby weeds are burning, I ask Mia to put down the fire.

I'll try the remaining nature magic. I use [Signal] to send Morse codes to Nana. I ask Nana to activate [Signal] too so that she can receives it.

"It's ton ton ton, tsu, tsu, tsu, ton ton ton."
"Then, try to send the same thing back."
"Yes, master."

A signal sound from one scene of the movie I've seen a long time ago is playing back in my head.
Arisa who's seemingly bored begins to sing [SOS] song while doing strange choreography. I wonder if that's from olden idol? Since the song is upbeat, Pochi and Tama have also begun to dance together. Even Mia is accompanying the music with reed flute.

No well, you girls, you don't have to force yourself to watch, if you're tired it's fine to do as you like you know?

I pull myself together and use [Sonar]. It's searching for enemies in 20 meters wide range. It seems that it doesn't detect small animals, and only targets dangerous ones like poisonous snakes and stray dogs. The effect only last for five minutes. I know now just how irregular the radar is.

I try the remaining ones in turns. [Fence] creates transparent horse-rail-like fences that's one meter tall and one meter wide. However, it's quite fragile, it partially breaks from [Short Stun], and completely breaks when Liza lightly kicks it.
It might be usable if the opponent is just some low level thieves, but if it's a knight-class, then it would get broken without any resistance.
The last one I use is [Cube], and it's just like how Arisa has demonstrated, the activated cube is not more than 10 centimeters in size.

◇

It's the real thing now.

So that Liza and the others don't get hurt, I move two mountains away from them. Unlike from before I announce that I'm high leveled where they'd get worried if I go alone in uninhabited place, they don't object at all now. However, when we're in place with people, there's always someone beside me at midnight, perhaps they're thinking that I'd go to have some night time. Good grief, it's no good. I've felt that my sexual desire has decreased sharply after I arrive at this world, but I'm still a healthy man. I'd like to have a nightlife once in a while.

My destination is a place with five monsters called Soldier Beetles. They're drone beetle-like monsters with the size of light cars, their level are lower 20s.

When I'm two kilometers away from it, I activate [Sonar] and go closer. It seems that the range of enemy search is around one kilometer. I think it's because the skill level is 10, it's quite different from the initial one. However, since I have radar already, it's regretful to think that I'd never use this magic. The effective time has been quite extended too.
Above all, judging from the name, it'd be bad if an enemy with good sense notice me when I'm searching using this. In truth I could sense radar-like wave of magic from [Sonar] when I'm using [Signal] magic. On the contrary, I think it could be usable for fake warning.

Since I've got to the place 500 meters away from the monsters, I shoot [Short Stun] to check its effective range. Just like Magic Arrow, the possible shot amount has increased. The amount is the same as magic arrow it seems. I shoot one to one of the beetle. The remaining 120 go towards the other three. I divide it to 20, 40, and 64.
As the result, the beetle shot with one is fainted with dented shell, but the one shot with 20 gets its shell crushed and is half-dead. The beetles shot with 40 and more have been completely smashed.

It's disqualified as a magic for making thing faints.

It'd be fine if the opponent are knights or heavy infantries, but if it's civilians, they'd surely die. I'll analyze this spell, and I'll make one that won't increase in strength with skill level and status. The time limit is until I get to Toruma (Ossan)'s household to make scrolls. It's been awhile since I've got a work with delivery date, it's tensing me up.

Strangely, the only safe monster is coming toward here. Is it not running because its intelligence is low, or is it trying to revenge its friends.

Since it's vigorously flying here, I try to use [Mud Wall (Wall)]
I use it at maximum power, and a gigantic wall of 300 meters wide, 20 meters high, and 5 meters thick wall appears.
Since I create it just before the beetle, it hits the wall splendidly. I've thought that it would pierce through the wall, but seems that the wall is surprisingly hard, and the monster is stuck on the other side of the wall.

--Looks like I could build a castle overnight.

Since it'd only obstruct me if I leave it alone, I destroy it with [Rock Smasher]. The mud wall becomes fine sands and collapses. Since it looks like I'd get swallowed in it, I quickly jump onto a nearby tree and get out of the trouble.
Once again, I make [Mud Wall], and cancel it, it returns to the similar state as the original. As expected, the destroyed woods and undergrowth aren't restored.

The fainted monster finally recovers after 30 minutes, and it's going here. Since it's firing fire bullet even though it's just an insect, I take it with [Air Curtain]. Even though it's taking the fire bullet directly, the fire bullet is not piercing through and gets scattered away in front of the wind wall. It seems to be usable as defense if the opponents are just small fries.

The insect seems to have given up on fire bullet and begins to ram here, I'll put up [Cube] to stop it. Looks like I could create 300 meters cube at most, but the limitation is that I can't create one if there's something inside it. I make a cube of about 10 meters big in front of the beetle. The beetle can't break through the cube, just like with the mud wall. It loses its momentum and stops after pushing the cube for about 20 meters. The beetle stalls and begins falling, but by flapping its wings, it lands near me and runs on the ground attacking me.

Just as expected.

I make [Fence] in front of the beetle that's attacking on the ground. It looks like I could create multiple ones with this too, but since I could only create five spatially, I create five of it.
The fence seems to be fixed on the ground, and it won't move as long as it's not destroyed. The beetle which is moving at 30-40 Km/H is skewered by one of the fence and dies, but there's no trace of the fence moving. Since the fences could be canceled individually, I remove the unused ones and leave one alone. I leave it to confirm the effective time.

I put one complete corpse of the beetle into the Storage, and only collect the shells and the

cores of the rest.

The dying one becomes a sacrifice for [Condense]. It seems that the focus power is increased with skill level, the condensed moonlight becomes laser-like. Unfortunately since the original light for the amplified one is weak, the power isn't that strong. It's about as powerful as one Remote Arrow. Furthermore, the effect only materialize after five minutes, so I think it's only usable during daytime as point attack. If it collects sunlight, the power will surely increase. Since it somehow feels cruel to keep doing this, I end it with Remote Arrow.

Continuing on, it's time to experiment with [Furnace Flame (Forge)].

I've thought of making furnace with [Mud Wall] reinforced with [Hard Clay], but I decide to use [Cube] instead.

I create transparent furnace by using several [Cubes]. It looks like the cube is reinforced if they're connected. Even though I could erase [Cube] blocks that has been connected whole, I could not separate them once connected so I have to be careful.

And then I put copper and iron daggers inside the transparent furnace made from Cubes, and activate [Furnace Flame (Forge)]. Three minutes after activation, the copper dagger melts, and in five minutes, the iron dagger also becomes liquid. It seems that [Cube] is about as durable as [Shield], it could withstand [Furnace Flame (Forge)] for 30 minutes before breaking. I found out that I could extend the endurance time to 50 minutes by creating two Cubes layered.

I open the menu and narrow the search on the map. I search for places where there are metal veins on the mountain nearby. There are veins for metal called [Iron Stone] and [Uutz Steel] it seems. I mark them, including the copper vein.

The former is approximately 30 meters away from the ground surface, so I expose it by skillfully using [Mud Wall (Wall)]. The rest of the work is done by adjusting the power of [Rock Smasher] to cut the ores. I've thought of using the sharper holy sword for an moment, but I decide to use [Rock Smasher] as a training for using magic.

Then I put the iron ore inside the transparent cube-made furnace, activate [Furnace Flame (Forge)], and begin the refining process. At first, I fail at the adjustment and the finished product is unusable, but by the third time, I'm able to refine normally. The light is dazzling, but thanks to Light Adjustment skill, it doesn't become a problem. Even while being discouraged by the small quantity of ingots refined from large quantity of ores, I continue the work.

Since Uutz Steel would darken and become brittle if I go too far, I have a hard time in adjusting the heat level for refining. I might've not been able to refine it if I don't know the accurate temperature from AR.
Thanks to the complex refinery from before, the copper one is easy.

I've thought that my magic power would be exhausted halfway, but maybe thanks to the quick MP recovery rate, it isn't even depleted by half. I've made 100KG iron ingots, 20KG

Uutz steel ingots, and 70KG copper ingots before the sky turns white. The copper ingots alone worths 200 gold coins huh. Magic is tremendous after all.

I take out an anvil from the Storage, and try to create an iron sword using the same process of creating the fairy sword, but I'm only able to make a brittle sword. It's not like it could not receive magic power, but it's cracked even before I put 10 points on it. So the process is for mithril after all.

Let's try to look for mithril veins when we're moving.

>Title [Magic Blacksmith] is Acquired

◇

I'm going back by strolling on the sky by using Cubes as footholds. I've changed into Silver Mask since I don't know if anyone's watching.

At first I make cubes in the shape of stairs to play around with, but since it's fun to walk on the air, I try to see how far I can go up while shouting, "I can fly". I'm unusually in high tension if I do say so myself.

I keep making footholds as I jump from them, and I'm become able to see the morning sun on the horizon. I could see a white line leading up to the sky at the southeast direction, I wonder what's that? Judging from the map, it's on the direction of Bornean forest. Well, I will probably know about it in time.

Since it's become hard to breath, I try to see below, and my back grows cold.

Huh? Did I get too carried away?
According to the AR, the altitude is about 4 kilometers. Even I would probably die if I fall from this height. I must be careful not to run out of magic power.
Even though I'm at this altitude, I unexpectedly don't feel fear, since the stratosphere should be about 10 kilometers high, there's no worry of jumping out to the space yet.

For approximately 10 minutes, I practice fighting in the sky. 3D Maneuver, and Space Grasp are doing nice jobs. I've become able to understand the minimum [Cube] size needed too.

I feel like I could fight dragons or demons in the air if it's like this.
There's a hawk with five meter wing-span near the mountain, so I try practicing air battle with it during my way back. If I have wings to glide through air, there would be more usable tactics.

>[Sky Drive Skill Acquired]

Sky Drive is a skill with similar effect as using [Cube] as footholds to fly in the air, it uses less magic power. I would be able to have midnight stroll easier with this. Since the only one who could endure the wind pressure and decompression is me, it's too bad that I can't invite Arisa and the others to have some air night strolls. I think there's a wind magic called

[Windbreak (Canopy)], I'll request it from Ossan's household when I'm getting scrolls from them.

>Title [One who Flies without Wings] Acquired

Part 8 - Wolves and Stalker Reserves

Satou's here. Isn't it unexpectedly recently that the word 'stalker' become popular? It'd have been fine if the earnest person isn't troubling other people...

◇

"Master, it seems that the road is split at the foot of the mountain ahead. Which way should we go?"

Having been called by Lulu from the coachman's seat, I stop the experiment.

"Nice, Lulu! Now now, you must go quickly!"
"Flirting, end."

Arisa pushes my back to hurry me go the coachman's seat. I leave Tama who's sleeping on my lap to Mia. Pochi is sleeping on Nana's lap. Very enviable, I wonder if she'd let me take her place if I give her meat during meal.

I thought Mia's line was a false accusation, Nana and me were only facing each other for experiment, we were not flirting.

I was only trying to check the limit of [Signal] magic; whether we could receive signal from [Signal] magic if there was no receiver, so Nana and me were sitting face-to-face with each other.

In addition, since I wasn't allowed to stare at Nana's breasts, I looked at her face, but they were still saying bad things.

"Really, on top of gazing each other, you two were even locking hands, really!"
"Guilty."

My [Magic Perception] skill immediately kicked in, but Nana couldn't receive the signal, so I was to tap Nana's palm with my finger whenever I was sending a signal.

It's purely an experiment.
There's nothing shameful--I've thought of the little perk, but it's a secret.

To change the subject, I go to the coachman's seat and give instruction to Lulu.
From the mountain trail we are on now, I could see the road extending at the direction of the forest. The road that extends beyond the forest leads to Daregan city. I could even faintly see something that looks like the outer wall beyond the forest from here.

"Turn left there, don't go straight."
"Yes, I understand."
"Huh? Haven't I said that Daregan city is straight ahead? I've already told you to board on a ship there to get straight to the dukedom's capital."

That was plan, but it'd be bad if we went to the city ahead.

"We're going to encounter the stalker reserves if we keep going."
"Geh, don't tell me, it's Oppai-san?"
"W, wait Arisa. For the time being, she's the daughter of master's master, call her Karina-sama properly."

Lulu gives a warning, but since Lulu herself has added, "For the time being", I understand Lulu's assessment about her.
Karina-sama and three bodyguards-like maids who are traveling together with her are in the Daregan city ahead. Looks like it's impossible for knight Zotor or junior knight Hauto to go with her after all. Even lady Karina should have had many jobs like suppressing thieves in her own territory. She's a pain in the ass.

"Karina~?"
"Now, it's time to have a match nano desu!"

Pochi and Tama are gleefully jumping out to the coachman's seat. That reminds me, these two love to have a match with lady Karina.

At first they were waging war with lady Karina to protect me since she looked like she was bullying me, but the three were somehow in the same wavelength and had good matches. It seemed that Lady Karina were reluctance in hitting the two, so it became a defensive match. One out of two matches, the two ran out of their stamina and lady Karina won. If it was not that then both sides ran out of stamina and it became a draw.

The two are looking around restlessly while saying, "Karina, not here~?", "Not here nodesu."
While we're having such idle talk, Liza who has gone ahead to scout the junction comes back. There is no thieves in our course today, so only Liza is riding a horse.

"Master, there's a group of human on the fork ahead, Since I could hear sounds of weapon clashing, they might be thieves."
"Thieves extermination~?"
"I'll do my best nodesu!"

Looks like lady Karina has disappeared from Pochi's and Tama's heads after they hear about the thieves.
We can't see them from here, but the people that Liza's found aren't thieves according to the map. There are several martial artists, and the rest are farmers, probably from the neighborhood.

◇

There's an open space on the crossroad. Two martial artist are exchanging sword blows on the center of the open space. Around 20 farmers are watching that battle from a distance.
It appears that it's a betting game, the farmers are having heated discussion in excitement.

There are several carts parked on the open space. Since they're empty, the people here are

probably going back after delivering goods to Daregan city.

Pochi and Tama want to participate, but since the martial artists here are only level 4-7, they're too weak for them, so I forbid it.

Pochi and Tama are demanding persistently on my sides, but they'd only bully the weak here if I give in here, so I endure it. The two don't seem to be giving up, but Liza who gets down from the horse lifts them up in both hands.
Pochi who rarely sulks is posing like a corpse listlessly while being carried by Liza. It's been awhile since I've seen the Dara~n pose. Tama who's still resisting Liza looks as if remembering something after she sees Pochi, and takes the same pose.

Now then, the opponents for Pochi and the others aren't them.
There are three people heading here from the forest chased by wolf packs reflected on the radar. Things would become quite horrible if those wolf packs rush to where the farmer crowd is. I could exterminate them with Remote Arrow, but I'll have them become sacrifices for Pochi's and the others' fighting spirit.

I park the wagon on one corner of the open space, and bring only the three beastkin girls near the place the wolves will come out.
Pochi's ears are twitching. Apparently she has detected the wolves' presences.

"Master, wolves nano desu!"
"Nyu~? there is?"

It seems Tama and Liza still haven't heard them. Liza is glancing here, so I nod.

"Bro, some strong looking guards you have there. Would you like to compete? You'll only get some injuries even if you lose, but you'll get one big copper coin if you win. It's not a bad deal right?"
"No, this girl is saying that there's something strange in the woods."
"That so?"

A man who looks to be the gambling manager greets me, but I only answer him vainly. They're already under 200 meters away.
The manager seems to have heard the wolves sound too, he gives sign to the farmers to move away. The manager is talking about something to five people who seem to be martial artist.
Let's settle it before they join.

I chant dummy spell to activate [Fence], and put five transparent fences in places.

So that the mercenaries don't plunge to the fences, I stop them when they come out of the woods and roll them behind the fences.

"Run away! Wolf packs are coming."
"We will try to buy some time. So, quickly."

Two of the three thrown ones warn us, but it's unnecessary. I assure the three.

"It's alright. We'll quickly take care of it, so rest behind the fences."

Wolves that are chasing the mercenaries are coming out of the woods when I'm talking, but they get skewered by the fences one by one. With their daggers, Pochi and Tama easily deal with wolves that are somehow able to avoid it.
The wolves group that tries to circumvent the fences get pierced by Liza's spear. I could hear the mercenaries murmur, "Amazing", "Strong", but I ignore them.

I kick the jaw of the unfortunate wolf that have jumped over the fence while heading here. It bounces on the fence and flies to before Tama.

"Dangerous~?"
"Aah, sorry."

Tama quickly finish the wolves even while complaining. The three have defeated about 20 wolves in the blink of an eye. There are still three wolves in the woods, but since they escape to the depth, I don't chase them.

"Yer' amazing, pipsqueak!"
"The wolves were like puppies!"

At first the farmers are frightened by the wolves voices, but they've soon watched the battle it seems. Several of them are raising voices of praises.

"I'm not pipsqueak nodesu! Pochi nano desu!"
"Tama~ na no."

Liza is indifferently dismantling the wolves, but Pochi and Tama are taking victory poses while lifting the wolf with one hand together triumphantly. They immediately get scolded by Liza and go back to the dismantling.

The gambling manager and the five martial artists are escaping toward Daregan city. In a way, their actions are justified. Or rather, half of the farmers who haven't escaped are the weird ones.

◇

I leave the dismantling process to Liza and the others, and go to where the mercenaries are behind the transparent fences. All three of them are women. One of them is level 5 with dagger skill, but the rests are level 3 with no skills. Only one of the level 3 has serious injury.

"Are you alright?"
"Yes, thank you for your help."
"I'm sorry. We didn't think that there would be people here."

Certainly, if this is a game, i's like Train, or rather an MPK. Let's have them reflecting on it. I

give them my honest opinion while giving emergency treatment to the girl with serious injury who doesn't have energy to talk with me.

"It would have become a catastrophe if these girls weren't here. I suggest to hunt in moderation."
"It's my fault. Since it was our first dispatch, we chase far into the forest and got counterattacked..."

A female mercenary who looks to be the leader makes an excuse. She's 18 as the oldest of the group, the other two are 15-16 years old. I'd like you to learn to act carefully before you lose your life.
I've mostly completed the emergency treatment, but her stamina still keeps decreasing. I lift the girl and see her back, there are three claw marks. Like this, scars will remain. Even though her appearance is like a 10 years old, it's probably still harsh for a woman.
I've had no intention of using potion here, but it can't be helped. Even though the girl is losing consciousness because of the injury, I pour the potion on her mouth. Since I can feel criticizing gaze from behind, I restrain myself from doing mouth-to-mouth.

As the result of saving these girls at this time, I've given clues to troublesome people. I regretted that I didn't ask them to not speak about it, but I didn't regret saving them since forsaking them would leave bad taste on my conscience.

I decide to depart while leaving the girls who are surprised with the effect of the potion. We distribute half of the entrails from the dismantled wolves to the watching farmers and the mercenaries women. As expected, I can't exactly ignore the eyes full of expectation coupled with drools.

Part 9 - Karina and the Maid Squad

God is mean.

Even though the unpleasant male soldiers have disappeared, and it'd finally be comfortable, I have to accompany the young lady on a journey...
I dream of wearing that cute maid uniform again, but I endure it for now.

"Pina-san, Pina-san, Karina-sama has gone off, is it alright not to stop her?"

The subordinates are calling me who's deep in thought. As it turns out, the other maids who accompany the young lady with me are the problem children, Taruna and Erina, god is really mean.

I put off the grieving for later, and see at the direction Erina's finger points to, my face turns pale.

The young lady has been peeking on the cliff below since awhile ago, but then she jumps down it without hesitation.

"Y, young lady."

I rush up to the edge of the cliff in hurry, but it's probably too late now. Ah, how incompetent of me to not even able to stop the young lady's suicide. I'll be fired from my precious workplace too. I might be downgraded to be a slave. Considering the pampering baron-sama, he might even sentence me to decapitation out of grief. Ah, such misfortune.

"Pina-san, rather than indulging in your misfortune, you should look at that instead you know?"

Contrasting her calm outward appearance, the brash Taruna points on the foot of the cliff. Did the young lady perhaps only suffer from bone fracture and fall somewhere?

I brace myself and see under the cliff, the young lady is lively exterminating the thieves.
My neck is safe somehow.

◇

"Young lady, please don't do such thoughtless action--"
"My, I'm protecting populace from thieves, it's our duty desuwa."

As if covering over my scolding, the young lady pushes her ideal. This person really doesn't listen to other people. In the first place, this is the dukedom, the young lady doesn't have to act for the populace here, but she's said that it's trivial even when I point it out.

"I'm sorry Pina-dono. I had thought of stopping her, but several lives were depending on us. I'd like you to overlook this."

Voices of a gentleman talks for the young lady, it's the very mysterious talking magic tool, Raka-dono.
Although, I think the restraint for the young lady's recklessness is gone ever since she's got hold of this magic tool.

The ones she's saved are merchants party who are going to the Daregan city. Their guards have been killed by the thieves, but they themselves are only suffering from minor injuries. Since there are no one who's dying, let's let them tend to their own injuries.

Taruna and Erina are stripping equipments from the half-killed unconscious thieves. It's annoying, but I'll help them. The smells from leather armors make me want to pinch my nose, but since they can be sold for some money, we're taking them before dealing with the thieves. Unfortunately, their swords and spears that seem to be made of bronze have been destroyed. The young lady used her superhuman strength to destroy them, it'd had been more profitable if she cut their throats instead.

After I've finished stripping off their equipments, I dispose the thieves one by one. The thieves have lost their way, they're probably prepared to lose their life like this. I stab their hearts in one go to at least not make them suffer.
Taruna and Erina have finished dealing with theirs too.

We go back toward the merchant who is troubled with the young lady's talk about hero's tale. The ignorant young lady refuses the merchant-dono when he's going to give her rewards, "Such things like rewards aren't necessary desuwa", she says. Since I can't ask for rewards now, I have the merchant-dono to buy the equipments we've got from the thieves. He buys it at higher prices than the market's. It probably includes the reward.

Due to the merchant-dono's earnest request, we're going to escort them to Daregan city. It's a secret from the young lady, but I think escort's job is attractive. With this, we don't have to do things like renting barn for everyone but the young lady when we're staying at the inn in Daregan city.
The traveling expense from Nina-sama is barely enough for a round trip to Daregan city. Considering the poor financial situation of the baron's territory, she could not give us more than this. If the head-maid hasn't given us one silver coin in secret, we might have had to hunt along the way.

Evening of that day, we're treated to the meal made by the merchant-dono's slave, but it's only cereals porridges. Moreover, 30% of it consist of brans. He doesn't seem to be a wealthy merchant. The young lady gives an impression, "What strange textures.", but I think it's a strong point of her that she would eat up food even if it's bad. She's been raised to be poor--er, economical since she's child in the honorable house.

I want to quickly arrive at Daregan city, and eat the popular fish dishes with relish.

◇

"Now then, young lady, is it alright for us to not greet the viceroy?"

"It's fine, I don't have dress for the greeting anyway. It's not good to go meet them looking like this right? Or, are we going to tailor a dress?"

The young lady's words are reasonable.
Even though the clothes that the young lady wears is nicely tailored, it's a soldier-like clothes, not something that a lady would wear.
We're barely able to pay hotel fees, there's no way we have money to make dress.

"Pina-san, we've already got an inn, so let's quickly eat some fish~."

The suggestion is so, the gluttonous, Erina-like. However, first we have to straighten the clothes of the young lady. Since she hasn't been able to bathe until here, I'll dust her off.

"Taruna, go ask the inn's caretaker to bring hot water. Erina, go to the port and ask if anyone's seen someone that resembles chevalier-sama. Taruna should also go get informations from the market after you've done arranging the hot water."

I give the reluctant two works. Since there's still some time until evening, I'll make them work until then.

I receive the hot water from the inn's caretaker, and wake up the young lady who's begun to doze off on the bed. I take off the young lady's remaining clothes and wipe her body with a clean cloth that's been soaked in the hot water. They are violently-sized breasts no matter how many time I see it. As I'm perfectly flat, I occasionally feel hateful on it.

"Okay, I feel refreshed now."

The young lady falls on the bed while muttering satisfyingly. She's probably tired from her first long journey. She's sleeping just like that, while not wearing even a piece of string.
I put her underwear and night-wear while being careful not to wake her up. I wash dirty laundry until the two come back.

◇

Even though I feel sorry to say that it's as expected, the two aren't able to get any clue about chevalier-sama.
If we still can't find any clue after searching for the whole day tomorrow, it'd probably be better to rely on Toruma-sama and head to the viscount Shiimen house in the dukedom's capital.

"Yay, fish~♪"
"It's not something you can often eat in Muno city."

The dining room at the first floor of the inn is quite lively. Since our purses have got a bit swollen from the rewards as escort, we order famous set of fish meal. The two are innocently frolic, but as for me who isn't good with fish bones, I'm not that excited. It's finally here. I move the cut white meat to a different plate, and present it before the young lady. It should have been the work of the two, but if I leave it to the rash Erina and the

thoughtless Taruna, the young lady will choke on fish bones.

"My, the salt works well, it's delicious desuwa. This rice? This strange texture matches well with the fish."

I'm glad that it suits the young lady's taste.
This town has a staple food, a cereal called rice. Not unlike baking bread, it seems that it's difficult to make, but it's more filling than bread.
That reminds me, it feels similar to the snack called rice porridge that chevalier-sama's made during my night watch shift. That rice porridge should had been made only with rice, water and salt, but the deep taste really didn't make you think it was. I want to eat it once again.

Erina pulls my sleeves when I'm lost in thought.

"Pina-san, postpone your fun delusion for a bit, and listen carefully to the conversation of the female mercenaries behind."

Erina whispers rude things to me. Some punishments are necessary later.
It seems she's talking about a group of three girls. The clothes of one of them is quite worn. There are patches on the shoulder and the back, I wonder what kind of thing she's fought to get those rips? Or rather, it's good that she lives after going through situation that rip her clothes like that. Just at that time, a different female veteran mercenary who seems to be their acquaintance comes beside them.

"Hey, isn't it quite rare for you girls to eat in this kind of restaurant?"
"Nee-san, I'm sorry for not contacting you for so long. We've got a bit of money from wolves extermination, so I've thought of eating something nice once in a while."
"That so, since the wolves packs are getting larger recently, don't chase them too deep into the forest okay?"

What does Erina want me to hear?
It seems that the veteran's hit a sore spot, the three girls fall silent from her words.

"Ah, Nee-san, I'd have liked that advice a bit earlier."
"What's this, did you guys run into a large pack of wolves?"
"That's right. We were chased hard by 30 wolves in the forest, I thought we were going to die."
"How did you get out of that without even an injury?"
"Ah, you don't believe me huh."
"I was so greatly injured that my clothes becomes tattered."

Those rips are from wolves are they.

"Oy oy, there's limit to bluffing too you know? If you get injuries from that kind of rips, you'd have been dead now right?"
"Hehee, magic medicine! I've been given magic medicine. He must have fallen for me, no doubt about it! He looks good too, I wonder if I should aim for marriage~?"
"Magic medicine you say. How many gold coins do you think a magic medicine that could

heal even the scar worth. If you're a peerless beauty then I understand, but there's no way there's such a good natured person willing to save a plain young girl like you."

I see, I have such a good natured man in mind.

I look at Erina who's also listening, and we nod our heads. It's most likely chevalier-sama. He has also generously given an expensive magic medicine to a girl who's been ran over by carriage in Muno city, it's quite enough as circumstantial evidence.

"Well, even if I give in to the story of the magic medicine, how are you girls able to escape the wolves?"
"That, the three demi-human girls that had tagged along with the person who gave that medicine defeated the wolves in a flash."
"They were great. Even though the dogkin and the catkin were children, they killed the wolf in one stab."
"However, the scalekin person was extraordinary. She defeats so many wolves with one thrust of the black spear with red glows."

It's decided.
There's no scalekin who wields a magic spear beside Liza-dono."

"Red spear? Isn't that a magic spear?"

From the veteran's words, the atmosphere of the dining room changes.

""""""Magic spear you say!""""""

The people who look like traveling nobles that have been eating fish set meals since awhile ago stand up all at once.
The nobles and their servants who have changed their facial expressions press on the young female mercenaries to inquire about it, but the veteran manages the situation, and charges for the information.

Three set of master and servants who have gained the information leave the dining room after finishing their meal in hurry.
I wonder what's going on? Magic tools are rare indeed, but I don't think it's rare enough to be chased that desperately. I think they should have dozens of gold coins if they're nobles, I wonder if they have some kind of reason for needing magic spear? I want to catch up with chevalier-sama before he's involved with troublesome things.

"Then, I wonder if the onee-sans that have been listening since awhile ago want to buy informations too?"

Looks like we've been found out.

"The ones you're talking about since before are acquaintances of me. The user of that magic spear is called Liza right?"
"Yes, she's said she is."

"What were the names of the little beastkins?"
"Wasn't it Pochi and Tama? At least remember the name of your saviors."
"But, we don't know the master's name right. I forgot to ask his name."

Normally, someone would have ulterior motive for saving people, it's really like chevalier-sama.

"I will teach you! He's a vassal of my father, chevalier Satou Pendragon desuwa! He's a master of both sword and magic!"

Ah, Karina-sama.
If you're boasting with such sparkly eyes...

"Hee, he's the young lady's favorite huh?"
"That's nice~ Chevalier-sama, that means he's a knight-sama?"
"Uwah~ I have to give up marrying into the rich huh, what a waste~"

Karina-sama says with red-face, "N, No. I don't have such relationship with that person." She's really unfamiliar with love stuff despite her age.
Erina and Taruna are also watching the young lady with warm gazes.

From the information we got from the girls, chevalier-sama was a stone throw away from Daregan city yesterday, and instead of entering the city, he had gone to the highway headed to the neighboring city, Gugurian.
I think his instinct is too sharp, it seems that the road of Karina-sama's love is going to be thorny. Bud might unexpectedly sprout on Erina instead.

Tomorrow, we're going on the boat to get ahead of him. If we don't catch up to him soon, the day where we have to stay in the barn might not be far.

I think it's alright for me to have a delusion of getting the home-made cooking of chevalier-sama.
Karaage, Tempura, Ebifurai, ah, there are too many. Crepes is nice too. However, I want to eat the rice porridge with just the two of us together once again after all.

Part 10 - At the Canal's Bank.

Satou's here. There's this famous scene of huge ships joining together while advancing through the river from a movie about the romance of three kingdoms. It's not something that would happen in real life, but I'd like to see it at least once.

◇

A large river is flowing 100 meters away from the highway our wagon is running on. It can't be seen now since there's a hill obstructing it, but it'll be visible in about 10 minutes. A large ship is currently going to the same direction, we might be able to see it.

There's a 800 kilometers long great river in this territory. From the Daregan city that we've ignored yesterday, the river connects to four cities starting from the capital.

If the traveler's journal is to be believed, the canal is made by a large empire that precedes Shiga kingdom. It was made with magic right? I think the figures of giants and golems doing public construction works are great.
Calculating for a bit, if they use soil magic like I've used the other day, they could make 2-3 kilometers long canal in a day, so the whole canal would probably be completed if they work hard for a year. As expected of fantasy. A large construction works sounds quite easy.

I understand that the Oyugock dukedom is vast after seeing such great large river. Isn't it enough to house 10 small countries I wonder?

The oval-shaped Muno territory is about as wide as Hokkaido, and although the dukedom is only about half as wide, the total surface area seems to be about as vast as Japan's mainland. Just like with the baron's territory, most of it consists of undeveloped mountains and forests. Why aren't they developing it I wonder?

Even though the territory is this wide, there are only seven cities. Beside the capital with its 21.000 people, there is also a large city which houses 13.000 people at the mouth of the great river facing the sea. There are 10 villages with various population number near it, ranging from less than 1000 to about 5000 people. The total population is around 720.000 people. 80% of it are human, while the remaining 20% are demi-human. The majority of the demi-human are the ratmen as slaves.

The traveler's journal states that the territory doesn't have demi-human, what does this mean I wonder. Come to think of it, baron Muno told me that he also rarely see beastkin when he was staying in the dukedom.
Since the traveler journal that I always refer writes the baron Muno territory as marquis Muno territory, it might be informations from more than 20 years ago. I'd like a newer book if possible.

As for other things of note, there are about 10 special enclaves that are like the self-governing dominion of the dwarves in the dukedom. Every one of them is about as wide as the dwarves' or wider. There are a lot more small enclaves of only around several kilometers

wide, but since I can't be bothered to count all of them, I only mark the ones that are on our course.

According to the traveler's journal, there are sanctuaries for featherkin, and beasthead people in the territory. There should be another one, but it's not listed. Since we would not visit it during our journey, let's leave it alone. It's fine to visit it after we run out of place for sightseeing.

Finally, I narrow down the search for reincarnated or transported person. I'm relieved that there's none of them in this territory.

◇

Today, I drive the wagon after a long absence. Pochi and Tama on my sides are blowing something that seem to be reed flutes as hard as they could, like 'pipupipu'. They've taken Mia's lecture this morning, but it seems they can't do it properly.

Liza with her horse is coming closer. It seems she's found something.

"Master, please look over there. There is something on the other side of the forest."

I look at where Liza is pointing, but I don't see anything beside the ship's sail beyond the forest. No wait, that sail is probably the thing that Liza is talking about. Since the trees are growing on the lower terrain, the sail could be seen on the gaps between them. Unfortunately, we can't see the river yet.

"That's a ship's sail. There's a great river beyond the forest, it's probably sailing there."
"Pipo~?" "Pupuru."

Tama and Pochi who still have reed flutes on their mouth produce strange signals. Since I could predict the two's actions after that, I quickly restrain them. I tightly caught Pochi on my arm, but Tama smoothly slipped away.

"Ship~?"

Tama readily throws away the reed leaf, climbs my body, and look toward the forest. My clothes is stretched. I'd like you to stop gripping my hair since it's softly painful.
However, before I could warn Tama, Liza draws near with her horse and scoops Tama, then she puts Tama on the neck of her horse.

"Ship, I want to see nodesu."

Pochi who seems to have realized that I won't let her go no matter how much she wriggles looks up to me intensely and starts asking.

"You would see it in few minutes if you just sit tight."

She's persuaded and sit on one of my lap. After that, Pochi is acting docile, but then Mia

climbs on my shoulder by using the coachman's seat as scaffold.

"Mia, it's forbidden to ride on my shoulder with skirt."
"Nn."

Mia points at the trousers she's wearing. I can't see her face, but I can imagine it looking proud.
Arisa who gets on the coachman's seat's back while supporting her body with the wagon's canopy looks at Mia and says, "Fearful girl", but I ignore it.

The river comes into view before long.
A considerably large sail ship is advancing to the same direction as us. Since it's traveling downstream, it's faster than us.

Tama who's riding on Liza's horse is waving greatly at the ship. Since we still haven't come that close to the river, I don't think anyone over there could see it.

"O~y"
"Over there is returning the greeting nodesu."

Pochi says so and waves her hands at the ship too.

"They can see eh. I wonder if the one over there is a beastkin too."
"Bird~?"
"Bird-head-san nodesu."

Arisa is right on the money. The other party is probably a birdman.
Pochi and Tama are waving their hands until the ship disappears behind the forest.

◇

Our camping location tonight is at a tributary flowing from the large river. There are camping grounds on both sides of the tributary, but we've crossed the bridge to the other side. Normally, there would be a fishing village or the likes in this kind place, but there's only an abandoned village with no one inside.

Confirming the map, I could imagine the cause of the abandonment.

It's probably because of the flock of monster located near the basin on the upstream 15 kilometers away from this tributary. Their levels are on the upper 20s, they're level 26-29 monsters called Hard Newts, they seem to have special attack using acid breath. There are nine of them.
It seems that they're preying on level 10 insect monsters that live in the cave of the basin.

Since I want to harvest the crystals and the stalactites in the cave, I'll go see it tomorrow morning or tonight.

I give Pochi and Tama harpoons and soft baskets that could be attached on their waists,

they're going to catch small fish and shellfish on the river.

I go to the abandoned village to check just in case. There's already nothing left inside the houses, but there are traces of paddy fields on the cultivated land. They have plenty of water here, so they might have planted paddies. I try looking for wild growing paddies, but there's nothing after all.

"Big catch~?" "Nano desu!"

When I get back from checking the village, Pochi and Tama have also got back early. It seem that they're putting the spoils since they've had big catch.
There are large quantity shellfish that looks like clams inside the bucket that Pochi is happily showing me. A lot of palm-sized crabs and shrimps in the bucket filled with water that Tama shows me.

I'm drooling at the thought of roasted shellfish on a wire mesh dribbled with soy sauce. Seasoning it with salt and sake sounds nice too, but I'm avoiding everyone getting drunk of the smell situation.
It might be nice to divide the crab and make soup out of the half. The shrimps are to be fried. It's hard to throw away the idea of making tempura out of it.

◇

Now then, I leave the meal's preparation to Lulu, and I make a certain thing on the bank that face river.

It can't be helped that it's hard for me to talk about it, I make a 2.5 meter long bathtub with Mud Wall and harden it with Hard Clay. Furthermore, I collect pebbles on the edge of the river and put it in the bottom of the bathtub.

Everyone can get in if it's this wide.
Just so you know, by everyone I mean the women camp. I've made a bath for one person size in a separate place. It's not like I feel particularly embarrassed and I'm fine even if we get in together, but since I think that Lulu, who's in the height of puberty, would not be able to calm down, I divide the sections for man and woman.

Next I take a large barrel and use it to carry water from the river, repeating it for several trips. It's a hard job, but by making use of my high stats and Sky Drive skill, I've got it done in a blink of an eye. Of course I've already made sure that there's no one who witness it.

Continue on, I warm the water with Furnace Flame (Forge). I stop at 45 degree. Since I always use Furnace Flame every night lately, I've mastered the regulation of temperature.

Finally, I use Pure Water to erase the slight impurity.

In addition, I leave a barrel with fresh water for temperature control and a bucket; it's complete. I also make the washing space with Hard Clay. I put a drainboard below for when we're washing our body and it's complete.

Since there's only Sauna in Muno castle, it's a bath after a long time. Let's enjoy it relaxedly.

Various reactions appears when I tell everyone that the bath is complete. I explain it in simple term since no one beside Arisa knows bath.

"Kuh, mixed bath with a boy! Ah, so this is the rewards for all the hardships until now!"
"The baths are different for man and woman you know."
"W, what did you say----! This is why, herbivores! This should have been the time for love flirt hot spring!"

I've already expected Arisa who's in high tension toward strange direction. It's not a hot spring in the first place.

"Master, I'm applying for the duty of washing your back."
"No."
"Yes, that's a no."

I've also already expected Mia and Lulu's refusal to Nana's words, but Lulu's next words are unexpected. Moreover, they know about such custom like washing back huh.

"Master's back, I, I'll do it."
"Since master is refined, he might be embarrassed in showing his back to the woman of the same tribe. While it's presumptuous of me, I will wash it."
"Tama will do it~!"
"Pochi will wash nodesu."

Even Liza wants to participate. My back would turn red if so many wash it. I've already made tool for washing the back so there's no problem.
Somehow they look disappointed when I tell them so. Liza and Lulu urge me to take the bath first, but when I tell them that there's a different bath for me, they obediently go to the bathtub. As expected, Arisa says that she will follow me to the men's bathtub, but Lulu drags her away.

I enter the men's bath and look up to the sky. I begin to feel good when I see the stars. It's too bad that the stars aren't reflected on the water surface, but the reflection of the moonlight is quite beautiful. I've not been in an open nature bath since the college time where I go around visiting unexplored hot springs.

The men's bathtub is small compared to women's, it's about the size of a common household's bathtub. The size is only enough for the short me to stretch my legs.

When I relax while leaving my back on the bathtub's wall, I hear splash sound and my body feels heavier. I know that someone is coming with Space Grasp skill, but I don't know who since I've turned off the radar. I look up, it's Mia.

"Mia, this is the men's bath you know."
"Nn."

I gently reprove her, but she doesn't seem to care about it, sits before me and leans her back to me. I'd greatly welcome it if her outward appearance is like Nana, but since Mia doesn't even look like her secondary sex characteristic has begun, it feels like taking a bath together with a kid relative.

I'll let her do as she please since the retrieval squad seems to be heading here.

"Is there a bath in the elf village?"
"A joint one."

It's a public bath I guess?
When Mia leans her small head to my chest while I'm looking at the stars, the retrieval squad, or rather, the second raid squad arrives.

"Together~?" "Entering nodesu."

Pochi and Tama enter from both sides. You girls, no matter how small you are, the bathtub is over capacity. This is more like little girls bath rather than water bath. No, what am I saying. Since Pochi and Tama are taking the same postures as Mia, I support their backs with my hand so they don't sink.

"Wait, you three! Stealing the march is forbidden!"

Arisa is taking a daunting pose with a towel, or rather, a thin piece of cloth wrapped on her body. The cloth that sticks to her body is see-through, but I don't care. More importantly, my line of sight goes toward the senior group that has arrived behind Arisa. Nana is too brutal, no comment there, but I feel that Lulu's proportion has become better since I've met her.

In the end, I am to enter the women's bath per Arisa's suggestion. Of course, I check Lulu's and Nana's wills too, but they easily agreed unexpectedly.

Wide bath is nice after all.

There's a reckless violet-san under the water since awhile go. I can guess what she's up to, but since I've worn brand new trunks, she shouldn't be able to see what she wants. It's boorish, but since this is an emergency, I want you to overlook this.

Lulu is submerging until her shoulders nearby, but I feel slightly uncomfortable with her gaze locking on me.

I lean my back on the tub's wall and resume the earlier pose. The steam isn't really doing its work, so the view before me is difficult.

I feel a bit hot, so I take out my arms off the water, and they've become pillows. My right arm is for Pochi and Tama, the left is for Mia. Lulu is waiting for her turn somehow.

"Master, I've discovered a serious matter! I request confirmation."

Nana is calling from behind Lulu. When I see there, defenseless--

"Breasts float in water! Furthermore they're tender, and somehow cute."

There's a figure of beautiful woman who has taken off the cloth which has shrouded her a while ago and floats her breast on the hot water happily. Nana, GJ. This is the scene where I have nosebleed if this is a manga.

"Nana-san, no!"
"Ecchi."

Lulu stands before Nana and block my view. It's fine that she turns her back on me, but her cute butt is completely exposed.
The slightly late Mia stands before me and spreads her limbs. Of course she's not wearing anything, so I could see various places that shouldn't be seen. I'd probably be so glad I'd cry if I'm a lolicon.

The bath time passes with such noise.

Liza seems to like the bath, and enters for the longest time. The next morning, since she looks really sad when she sees the bath that has become cold, I warm it and then she takes a morning bath. I should make a folding bathtub I guess?

After that day, Nana begins to study water magic from Mia.
Since she's awfully happy with floating breasts, I wonder if she would make a water dress?

Part 11 - At the Canal's Bank (2)

Satou's here. We've always used seasoning casually, but aren't there only a few people who know what they're made of? Mayonnaise, Worcestershire sauce, dressing. You only understand the merit after it has disappeared, or so they say.

◇

"N, no, you can't, master."

Lulu looks at me with anxious face.

"It's alright. Now, relax yourself."
"Y, yes."

I put my hands on the waist of Lulu who's frightened while inching back, leaning her body on me.

"Let's go, Lulu."
"I, I can't. It's too big."
"You don't need to worry. Believe what I say."

While calming Lulu who's still anxious, I put my hands on top of Lulu's delicate hands.

And--

Lulu's finger pulls the magic gun.

◇

At the waterfall basin that spreads before our eyes below, there are six giant monsters resembling newts that exceed 10 meters acting as they please. The monster's name is Hard Newt, and their special ability is acid breath it seems.
Every one of them are on upper level 20s, they're relatively strong.

There's a reason why I take Lulu along for monsters hunting despite frightening her.

During Muno incident, Pochi's level had become lower than the others, so I took her on a monster hunting date when there were monsters on the highway near our camping ground. Arisa and Mia found out about it and protested that it was too unfair, so since it can't be

helped, I promised to take them on monster hunting dates whenever there were strong monsters on the highway near our camping grounds.

And then, they did rock-paper-scissor to decide their turns, but not only Arisa and Mia, Nana and Lulu also participated in it; eventually the order for the hunting date was Mia=>Lulu=>Nana=>Arisa. Doing it one-by-one is inefficient, but apparently, "Just the two of us together.", seems to be important.

About three days ago, I found reasonably strong monsters, so I took Mia along, but even though we had defeated seven level 15 caterpillar monsters, her level wasn't raised. Apparently, it's hard for elves to level up.

◇

"M, master one of them is coming here. W, what should we do."

Lulu desperately clings to my chest. Desperate Lulu is cute too.
I invoke Remote Arrow outside of her vision, and after a shot from the magic gun hits the monster, I destroy the hard newt monster easily with the arrow. It seems that the remaining five monsters have recognized us as enemies. Since the newts are climbing the cliff, I shoot them with Remote Stun to knock them down the cliff.

"Lulu, drink this, and shoot the second shot afterward."

I make Lulu drinks magic recovery potion, and let her charge the magic gun. I had thought that she could supply 30 shots since she was level 3, but her magic power was halved with just one charge. It seems that the charge efficiency is greatly different for each person.

Maybe her level has leveled up after defeating one monster, this time one charge only consumes 20% of her magic power. We aim together like before and shoot.
I destroy the monster with remote arrow after the magic gun hit it, after doing this work routine for three minutes, the extermination of six monsters is complete.

I leave Lulu who's completely exhausted after her first combat on the cliff, and go down to collect the monsters' remains. Looks like there are three monsters higher leveled than the ones earlier on the other side of the waterfall, but Lulu's level should have been raised to 7-10 after defeating this many. Let's leave the rest for the hunting with Nana.

I carry Lulu who's not feeling well on my arms, and run on the water surface of the great river along the highway leading to the tributary, back to where everyone is. Sky Drive skill is way too convenient.

◇

"Ara? Lulu what's wrong? Are you tired from your first battle?"
"A, Arisa. I, I'm fine."

Arisa runs anxiously when we get back to the camp. Lulu has firmly asserted that she's okay,

but she looks pale.
Her body seems to be surprised with the radical level up, just like Liza and the others have been in the labyrinth. If we take that time into consideration, she should recover if she sleeps for 3-4 hours. If it's painful, I'll give her an anti-fever potion to drink.

"W, wait, just what kind of things were you guys fighting?"
"Six newts on the tributary ahead."

Arisa who has confirmed Lulu's level presses on me. Lulu's level has gone up radically from 3 to 13 from just fighting six monsters. Her level rises considerably higher than my expectation. There might be First Attack bonus or something like in games.

Lulu has gained new skills, the [Cooking] skill that Lulu has longed for appears. Furthermore, she's also got [Shooting], and [Sniping], probably due to monster hunting, and there's also [Compounding] skill, maybe because she's helped me compounding before, and lastly, she somehow gets [Chanting] skill too. Lulu has never participated chanting training even once before, so I wonder why she's learned it? I'm envious.
Arisa knows the answer to that.

"Eh? Chanting? Ah~ I might know. Lulu has always practiced chanting together with me since we're small. She didn't learn the skill until now probably because her skill point wasn't enough maybe?"
"Then, wouldn't she learn Mind magic?"
"Somehow Lulu isn't able to think of anything related to science. She was just bad at magic theory no matter what, and dropped out halfway."

Drop out....

"Isn't fine if she just memorize it?"
"That's a wrong way of thinking! You have to understand the chant's meaning if you want to use magic!"

Looks like Arisa is quite peculiar with the aesthetic.
I'll teach Lulu some chants in secret next time. She might learn magic skill on the next level up after all. Or rather, I'd like her to teach me the chanting skill instead.

Arisa puts Lulu on top of a cushion, and cools her with a wet towel. I take out a painkiller and an anti-fever potion and hand them to Arisa.

"Thank you. However, you shouldn't ease the pain from level up growth with medicine. I haven't tried it myself, but it seems that the stat increase would be bad."

Hoo, is that so. I've almost made her drink it.

I leave Lulu's care to Arisa, and ask Liza to make an easy to digest food for one person. Pochi and Tama have gone to the great river to catch fish. Since we've had tempura yesterday, I guess I'll make fried white meat tonight.

While thinking such thing I lead Nana for sortie.

Hunting with Nana is easy since she could use Magic Arrow.
Instead, the soft feeling during the traveling to the hunting ground, and the clinging body with wet clothes when we're in the waterfall caves is so sexy, it's dangerous. I'd like to praise my reasoning mind.

The hunt ends with nothing noteworthy happening, and I collect crystals, jades and a bit of the stalactites inside the cave. If Nana didn't stop to admire the limestone cave for 30 minutes, it would had been over faster.

I wonder if the newts here are special and gives a lot of exp, Nana has also leveled up from 5 to 12. She has learned new [One-handed Sword], [Shield], [Parry], and [Horseback] skills. It seems her Nature Magic skill has leveled up too and she could use new magic, [Shelter], and [Sharp Edge] now.

◇

"In just half an hour, Lulu had surpassed my level, and in another hour Nana had equaled me. I think this is quite serious."
"Agreed."
"We want strong enemies too!"
"To the prey!"

Arisa and Mia who are in seiza with their hands on their laps are having a meeting.
What kind of farce is that?

"Prey~?"
"Meat, better than fish nano desu!"

Huh? Pochi and Tama have come back before I know it. Their buckets are full with caught fish. Looks like they have also properly catch shellfish, shrimps and the likes. I feel like eating Paella when I see the shellfish. Sadly I can't make it since I don't know the recipe.
Pochi seems to be dissatisfied with having fish every day. Maybe I should make some steak from the wolf meats.

Lulu seems to have woken up, but she still looks unwell. I decide to cancel our departure today and let Lulu and Nana rest.

When I tell Arisa and Mia about the insect monsters in the cave, I end up sortieing for the third time while carrying the two on both of my sides. The two hate to have their level behind more than being alone together.

"Uha! R, running on water like this. A water strider!"
"Float walk?"

I've already told about this to Arisa and the others, but they seem to have thought that it's not a skill that could be used for prolonged time.

Mia is probably talking about Float Walk, an intermediate level water magic.
I'll surprise them by flying in the sky next time.

"No wonder Lulu's and Nana's hunts were fast."
"Convenient right?"
"Nn."

The insect hunts in the cave is done by repeatedly having Arisa and Mia attack first with their magic and for me to destroy the monster. Since the two's magic power run out in the middle of the hunt, the pattern changes into me attacking first with Remote Stun, then the two attack with short spear and dagger to give damage, and I finish off with the fairy sword.

An insect monster gives less exp than 10% of the exp gain from the newt monster earlier. From Arisa's observation of the exp during the hunt, it seems that she would level up once after 40-50 monsters.
I can't check my own exp since the counter has stopped with number 9s lined up. Judging from the digits, there's no mistake that it's more than ten millions. There's a gauge that indicate the percentage to the next level, I only know that there are still 80% left until then. I don't want to think the concrete points.

The high-pace efficiency-maniac-like hunt ends after defeating more than a hundred small monsters for two hours, and the result is that both Arisa and Mia level up by 2. In spite of the fact that Arisa's level remain higher (than Mia's), she would level up again after a bit more. The required exp for elves to level up might be around twice of human.

Nevertheless, I wonder what do these many monsters eat to multiply so much?

Mia answers that question.

"Spirits."

We can't see it, but it seems that there's a place underground lake with transparent water inside the cave where spirits gush out, the monsters are predating them. Correctly speaking, it's not predation, but absorption it seems, however since Mia doesn't know the detail, I'll ask the adults in Bornean forest about it.

I try to stare hard at the underground lake, but unfortunately I can't see the spirits.

◇

I'm practicing the fairy sword to master it after the meal to help digest the food.

I raise the sword overhead, stop, put magic into it and swing downward. And then when the sword is down I suck up the magic power from it, and quickly raise the sword that has become lighter.

I'm getting used with the weight-changing characteristic of fairy sword and the swing speed increases little-by-little. In 30 minutes, I've grasped the movement I want after repeating

without stopping, I end the practice.

I've got applauses for some reason. Everyone has surrounded, watching me before I know it.

"Real~ly, cheat huh. Do you know what you've been doing?"
"It's just a form practice though?"

Like reaching the second self-taught form or something?
Arisa lays her hand on my nape, draws her face close and whispers.

"You don't seem to understand huh. Normally, one can't pour magic power into a sword that fast. Incidentally, you've even dispersed magic power from the sword, I'll say this again, something like absorption is impossible."

Is that so?
Since it's possible with Liza's magic spear, I've thought that it's obvious though?

"Isn't it because they think they can't that they end up not able to do it?"
"There's no way it's like that right? If people could so easily do it, something like magic potion isn't needed then. When you need to consume MP for magic, you could do something like absorbing magic power from a loaded magic tool, it could become the only battery."

Arisa releases her hands from my nape and takes up a giving-up pose.

I see, it's a good story.

I thank you Arisa. Since it's poor if it's just words, I hug her. Since Arisa is a mysterious creature who's fine with attacking but gets embarrassed when she's attacked by the proactive opponent, it's fun to occasionally do surprise attack.

For the time being, I should check the efficiency by pouring and absorbing magic power on the sword, putting it inside the storage for one night and the absorb the magic power from it; I decide to check how is the decay.

According to my expectation, it should be able to hold the same amount of magic power as I usually put it into.

Part 12 - Gururian City Disturbance

Satou's here. When I became a working adult, I ate a lot of convenient store's sweets for the sugar supply of my head. When I was a college student, I felt like I only ate Japanese confectioneries due to the influence of the lab senior.

◇

"When you get to Gururian city, don't miss out on eating the round red bean paste! Though since it's one big copper coin for one, it's not easy to have one. For a merchant like Onii-san, you'd get laughed by your business partners if you've never eaten one."
"What kind of sweets is it?"
"Umm~ you make this white lump and put the sweet black lump as the main part around it."

The sisters who are with us at the campground before Gururian city are talking about the established sweet in the city. It's somehow an imaginable, yet misleading explanation.

"You've never eaten one either have you. This girl becomes interested in the sweet after a merchant boasts about it in the village."
"Fuhn. When I get my wages at the apprenticeship, then. I'll eat it first and foremost~."
"Wages you say, it'll be years before that."

As I understand, these sisters come from a village nearby to be apprentices in a merchant store at Gururian city. They're guaranteed of necessities like food and shelter, but in exchange they won't get wages until they become full-fledged. This is like Edo era.

Such employment method might be unexpectedly cheaper than buying slaves for labor.

"Master, the merchants seem to be departing."
"Then, we should go too."

Liza comes to call the dawdling me.
Looks like the merchants who are with us at the camping ground are departing. There are three group of merchants. I heard a lot of stories from them when I offered them ales and fish last night.

The most troubling story is, "In a remote place deep in the mountain, red light could be seen, and sounds of hammer hitting something resounded all through the night.", such ghost story. It really feels like something I've done myself.

Thanks to my night work that's become a ghost story, I've successfully refined and casted a lot of tin and zinc. I made mud walls to prevent the noise from leaking out, but it didn't seem to be enough.

Since we could arrive at Gururian city before noon with the wagon, I invite the sisters to go there together.

"Yay!"
"Thank you very much. Is it alright?"
"I don't mind, we have the same destination anyway."

These sisters are doing reckless thing of walking to Gururian city on foot. It seems the distance between the sisters' village to the Gururian city is two days away by foot, good thing that they don't get attacked by beasts. Last night, they slept with us in our tent, but their chastities could've been in danger if we weren't there.

Our wagon joins with the other merchants' carriages while advancing.
There are a group of suspicious young nobles gathering on the open space before Gururian city, so I decide not to go first and blend with the other merchants instead.

◇

"Merchants who are visiting Gururian city! We desire magic swords. We promise to the people who give us magic swords that we will give them favor as purveyors in the future!"

An man past his 20s wearing knight-like clothes is appealing to the merchants who are lining up to enter the city. Naturally, no one answers it. There's a similar noble at the dwarf village, he's probably the same kind of him.

I've stored Liza's magic spear inside the Holding Bag since it looks like it'd get entangled. It became a problem when we were entering Muno city back then, I had put it away before this. Right now Liza is hanging a normal sword on her waist.

"Hey hey, that noble-sama said that he'd make you a purvoyer if you gave him a magic sword! It's amazing right, Onee-chan."
"It sure is. However, such expensive things like magic swords have nothing to do with us."
"You girls, you'd get deceived in the city like that you know?"

Arisa worryingly butts in the carefree talk of the sisters.

"That one is, you know,『We do not have money. However we want magic swords. Give it to us for free. As the compensation, we'll give you favor if we succeed in the future. Don't complain even if we don't succeed.』, convenient for them alone, such nonsense isn't it?"
"Uwah, so it's like that. I didn't know."
"Arisa-chan, you're smart even though you're small."

The sisters get down the wagon with Nana's help. They line up on people's queue since the queues for carriage and people are different.

"Satou-san, thank you~."
"Thank you very much. On top of letting us slept together, you even gave us meal all day."
"Don't worry about it."
"That won't do, we'll be working in a utensil store called Midoriya, so if you need something there do pay us a visit, I can't give you discount, but I'll prepare the best goods for you."

I think employees would only be given chores, but I accept the girls good wills and thank them.

The nobles and their servants from earlier seem to be negotiating with the merchants who are queuing one by one. I'll enter the city before they get here.

We go toward the gate without lining up. Nana and Liza have confirmed with the gatekeeper that nobles could be prioritized to enter first. Even though it's not like no-check admission in the self-governing dominion of the dwarves, they only check us formally.
I could hear, "Eh", and "So he's a noble-sama." from behind. Come to think of it, I've not told them my house name.

◇

During the past several days, I've made swords for Pochi and Tama--ones that would equal Liza's magic spear--but I've not been able to produce satisfactory ones.
I could give them the magic swords from the storage, but they're too big for anyone beside Nana, so I try to make ones myself.

There are five types of magic swords.

The first is the type that incorporates the magic circuit from Trazayuya's holy sword research. There are many good magic swords of this type. That being the case, the degree of difficulty is abnormally high.
The gold and silver wooden magic swords are of this type.

The second is the magic sword like the one elder Dohar has made. It's a type that could accept magic power without special magic circuit as it's a characteristic of magic metal like mithril or adamantite. It's hard to acquired the material, but their stabilities are their strong points.

The third is weapons made from monster's parts, just like Liza's magic spear. The performance is similar to the second type, but the individual difference is too great, weapons made from the same monster's parts could have great difference, there are a lot of poor ones.

The fourth is cursed weapons. Even though it has permanent magic grant, it basically gives harm to the user, so people who use this type are few. At present, I've never actually seen anyone who does beside elder Dohar.

The fifth is a type where the blade part and the magic circuit are made separately, and then attached to become a magic sword. I noticed this when I dissembled a magic sword from the storage. The blade part is ordinary, but the grip part has magic circuit imprinted. When you put in magic power, it gives [Strengthen] and [Dexterity] effects. It even quickens the sword's drawing speed.
You can separately makes magic circuit on the blade and the grip, this is easier than engraving magic circuit on the blade part.

The ones I've produced in the experiments are the first and the third type.

For the method from Trazayuya's document, I tried to create the circuit during the casting process of the sword, but since the circuit liquid was weak to heat, it dissolved halfway through. The sword can roughly accept magic power, but the circulated magic power is distorted, there's no practical use for it.

Next, I made blades by shaving shell from beetle monster and hard newt's bones, and permeated circuit liquid on the gap to improve the magic conduction. For once, real-like magic swords are finished, but the aspects such as strengths are inferior compared to Liza's magic spear so I put it on reserve.
I got [Bone Crafting] when I was shaving bones, although it seemed to be of little use.

◇

Sweet smells is drifting the moment we enter the city. It smells like a Japanese sweets, or rather, red bean pastes.

"Kuu, what a nice smell!"
"Is it Japanese sweets."

Arisa's and my tensions are rising while the others see us curiously.

"Young gentleman over there, how about some excellent round red bean paste?"

A girl of around a high schooler's age is selling while carrying a food tray on her neck. It's like a style of the boxed lunch seller from Showa era. Unfortunately her clothes is a normal plain village girl-like, not Japanese clothes. She's wearing a short apron on her waist.

I buy several round red bean pastes and distribute it to everyone. Mia looks a bit unwilling, but when I tell her, "It's a sweet snack made from grains and beans.", she timidly puts it on her mouth.

"I think it needs a bit more sugar."

Arisa makes a slight request, but everyone has already finished eating.

"Fuh, this is, that right."
"Umu, that huh."

Yes, it's an [Ohagi]. The inside of the dumpling is not sticky rice but granulated glutinous rice. The red bean paste is coarse too, it feels like [Ohagi] from long ago.

"So it's really true, this city's name is."
"I wonder if it's a bad pun."

People would not know that it's a bad pun if they don't know Japanese language so I won't tell this to anyone, but this [Gururian]. The one who's named this city is definitely a Japanese

who likes bad pun.

◇

We've wasted some time from buying the sweets. First of all, I have to go to the lord's place and hand Nina-san's letter.
Lady Karina and the maid squad are inside the ship that's currently entering the port, but they most likely will remain on the ship until it reach the capital. Since Raka should not be able to detect us here, there's probably no need to worry.

It seems that The First preliminary fights to enter the qualification are happening on the public parks here and there in this city now. The name [The First] is making me cry.

It looks like you need to pay three copper coins on the agency at the town hall to get the participation proof, and when there are 10 people who have gathered, the first preliminary round could begin.
A match happens every time two people gather, and after gathering 32 people who have win a match, the preliminary match is over, and the second match begin it seems. People who have won four first preliminary matches could participate on the second preliminary round. I see, I guess each city has to have best four. It has been a week since it begins, and there are already 20 people who have passed the first round.

There's a preliminary match taking place on the park near the main road, I stop the wagon and watch it. Since Pochi and Tama are restless whenever cheers are raised on the public park, I decide to watch it for a bit.

A sharp sighted weaselkin girl tried to sell me wager checks but I refused. When I ask Pochi why she is sniffing violently, it seems that she's smelled yakitori scent. I ask Nana to buy it. There doesn't seem to be any idiot that tries to pick-up Nana who's wearing a full body armor from head to toe.

I distribute the yakitori and minced fish meat on sticks that Nana's bought to everyone. Even Mia has bought fruit water unnoticed.

The people who participate in the preliminary fight are mixed goods of mostly level 3-7, but some who exceed level 10 rarely mixed in too. The ones who are fighting now are both on the upper level 10s.

They both wear leather armors, one-handed swords and shields, they are long-time mercenaries. Their levels aren't different with Liza and the others, but they're slow, and there are too many useless movements during the swords' blows exchanges. I'd say that the beastkin girls wouldn't lose against either of them, This is not favoritism.

Apparently, the winner of this match would be eligible to participate in the first preliminary round, so the cheering is quite frantic. However, to watch a game during weekdays like this, I wonder if this gallery is fine with their works?

It's probably not because of that needless worry, but a tumult can be heard from the public

park nearby.

"It's terrible! Monsters have appeared inside the city!"

That is terrible.
I confirm the map, but there are surprisingly a lot of monsters in the whole city. Looks like they are cavalry monsters called running dragons. It seems that most of them are assigned as the private soldiers of the viceroy.

There is no monster at the direction where the voice from before comes.

The one there is a demon--

Moreover, there's a troublesome person nearby.

Part 13 - Gururian City Disturbance (2)

Satou's here. I had often went to a cat cafe, but after I became a working adult, the chance to visit zoo or aquarium remarkably decreased. Even though they're safe places for having a date.

◇

The demon that has appeared in Gugurian city is of the same grade as the one from Muno city. The species is of the same Short Horn demon too, level 30, and it also has the same skills, [Strength], [Hard Body], [Transformation], [Flame Palm]; it has no magic skills. It's a demon totally suited to become a vanguard.

Nevertheless, I was certain that there was no demon before we entered this city. Or rather, I could affirm that there's no demon in the whole dukedom. It doesn't seem like the demon can teleport, so it's probably sent or summoned by someone.

I leave the horses and the wagon to Lulu and Nana, and we go to the street against the escaping crowds. When we're moving, I tell everyone that the one ahead is not a monster but a demon, its level, skills, and things to be careful during the fight.

Occasionally, there are people jumping on the air as if playing trampoline from the direction of the crowds. Even though the demon can't use magic, it doesn't seem to be weak. When the escaping people become scarce, the demon's figure can be seen.

The demon looks different than the one from Muno city, having bigger build, and six arms, it looks like a gorilla. The only common point between them is the red short horns, like their species' name implies.

Warriors who are fighting the demon are surrounding it. Several destroyed carriages from the battles are scattered around along with corpses among the heaps. It looks like there are survivors inside the carriage. Many holes are opened on the buildings that face the street. Near the demon, there's a soldier with heavy equipment and blue shell shield doing well against it with his shield. His level is 29, equaling the demon. I guess there's no need for back up with this?

And then as if betraying that thought, the demon swings its strong arms and blow some people to the air. Those people come flying here.

I quickly dash and catch one of them.
I release Cubes for the remaining two to cut their momentum. With this, at least they won't die. Endure it if you're a man.

I talk to the person I've caught.
Yes, the reason why we take action so conspicuously is because there's this girl near the demon.

"Please don't be so rash, Karina-sama."
"Eh, eh, Sa... no, Sir Pendragon."

Despite being confused when she knows that I'm the one who's received her, lady Karina calls my name. I know that she's faltering, but what kind of ritual she's doing by joining and separating her hands with stretched fingers in front of her breasts. Is she perhaps embarrassed?
Furthermore, while in my arms, she's muttering "To be hugged by someone other than father.", "He's unexpectedly strong.", or "The honeymoon is in the royal capital I wonder.", her monologue is running wild toward cryptic direction. It looks like she's not accustomed with physical contacts from the opposite sex.

"Princess carry is forbidden!"
"Nn, forbidden."

Arisa who's caught up kicks me from behind. I wonder if my butt have footprints imprinted?
Even though lady Karina has Raka's protection, she still has lost around 20% of her health, so I ask Arisa and Mia for the healing. And then, when I put lady Karina down, for some reason she holds my sleeves, and it seems the person herself doesn't understand why.

"Master, the front line has collapsed. I will assist them."

Liza declares so and heads to the battlefield. Pochi and Tama also charge toward Liza's direction after greeting Karina's breasts from both sides. What was that, I'm envious.

Since the demon is going to counter Liza's attack with triple punches, I intercept it by shooting Short Stun on every fists.

Liza's magic spear pierce the defenseless body of the demon that has lost its balance. She's activated magic edge of course. The attack only decreases 5% of the demon's health, but I think it's amazing when you compare it with the accumulated damage the demon has incurred.

Pochi and Tama who are late attack the bottom of the demon's knee simultaneously. The damage isn't even 1% of its health, but it seems to be painful since the demon raises a short scream and retaliates using its tail toward Pochi and Tama.
I throw someone's helmet that has fallen near my foot toward the demon's abdomen. It's so troublesome that I have to chant whenever I use magic since the peanut gallery is watching.
Since the helmet breaks the demon's posture, the tail attack loses its strength and Pochi and Tama become able to receive it by crossing their dagger, changing its course to the sky. The two make us of that vector well and take some distances away from the demon.

That reminds me, the heavy soldier from before is gone.

When I look below, the soldier has fallen near the demon's feet. The metal armor below his arms is greatly dented, blood is spewing out of his mouth.

"Pochi, Tama, take the heavy soldier to the safe zone when you have the chance!"
"Ay~""Roger!"

I throw Remote Stun on the Short Horn demon. During that gap, Pochi and Tama swiftly close-in and drag the heavy soldier to the peanut gallery.

"Before it was the intermediate class Great Hammer randomly shot, and just now it was advanced class Divine Hammer. He must be the [Black Gale]-dono who has his name comes out on the first preliminary round."
"No, [Black Gale] should have been a middle-aged man, he must the magic warrior, [Red Fighting Demon]."

The peanut gallery are making some irresponsible commentary. Who the heck are those people with Chuuni-like names. The peanut gallery are hiding in the building not too far away. I wouldn't have heard it if I didn't have the straining ear skill.

Since the defensive position has exited the scene, I guess I should substitute for it.

"■▼■▲ ▲■▲■ ▲▲Shield."

The materialized magic shield stops the blow from the fist of the demon that has got up and came to attack. It's an unexpectedly prolonged punch. That's not a metaphor, the punch really elongates for five meters, so I have to pay attention.

If it's stretching again next time, I'll tie it up like in manga.

"Over here you gorilla!"

Using provocation skill, I rob the demon's attention to me. With this, it shouldn't change its aim even if Liza and the others attack to some extent.

"I will assist you! Sir Pendragon!"

Lady Karina is calling my name in loud voice as if she's advertising to the public. Please stop

it.
She's sending glances at me frequently as if expecting me to call her name back, but I ignore it. She must not be spoiled.

Before she arrives at the demon, Arisa's and Mia's magic hit it first. Arisa's magic, Flash, burns the demon's eyes, Mia's attack, Mustard Mist, roasts the demon's lungs.
Mia, you'd roast my lungs too you know? I look at Mia with critical eyes, but she turns her head away.

"It's prohibited to look away in a battlefield desuwa."

Karina who's expressly came before me intercepts the demon's attack, and got blown away. Raka was shining before the attack hit her, and multiple small shield of lights was stacked defending her, that was probably why the damage was practically none.
I wonder if you could distill this automatic defense from Raka and mass produce it? I want to have everyone equipped with it by all mean.

Accompanied by dummy chanting, I invoke five Remote Arrows and launch them.
The demon's health is reduced by 30% in one go. That is from the attack of Remote Arrow from a distance. Since the demon is the type that specialize in physical attack and defense, its magic defense is probably weak.

"Arisa, please cover me with attack magic. Mia, please attack with water ball or water polo."
"Okkey."
"Nn."

Arisa makes Light Dagger flies toward the demon, but it gets destroyed with just a swing from the demon's arm. The water ball that comes a bit late only makes the demon wets.

Oh? Isn't it weak to magic?

"Well now, junior class magic like Light Dagger won't be effective against a demon."
"But, the magic arrows just now worked right."
"That was either intermediate class Javelin or advanced class Multiple Javelin."
"No, it must not have been Multiple Javelin indeed, is it~?"

The peanut gallery are noisy since awhile ago. Ten men and women with matching uniforms have come into my view. I wonder if they're magician's apprentices?

As they've hoped, I chant dummy intermediate class ice magic spell and shoot [Freeze Water] to the demon. The aim is the places that's got wet from Mia's attack.
Liza attacks with her spear at that place in no time at all, and the demon's arm is successfully broken.

Pochi, Tama, and the revived lady Karina throw small barrel filled water, and with the fairy sword, I cut the small barrels that have come near the demon making it wet to the skin.
I could end this by slashing the demon with the fairy sword, but it would be too conspicuous

with all these peanut gallery.

Alright, now I just have to freeze the demon, and have Liza knock it down to end this.

◇

I wonder if the temperature drops too low for the frozen demon, the section that's received Liza's spear attack crumbles and scatters away. The fragments that have become small disappear with black smokes. Wagahai-kun left a corpse, but lower grade demon would disappear huh? The splitter also became black dust back then.

The lower part of its body remain as it is, but a magic core that shines dull light peeks through the remaining upper part. Liza casually collects it. I look at the place where my crisis perception is reacting, a small red horn has fallen on the ground.

I appraise that, it's an item called [Short Horn]. The explanation part is written in demon language. I could roughly read it after I raise the skill level to 5. Unlike with the humans' magic tools, the explanation is simple.

"Transform a creature with intelligence on-site into a demon." is written there. The reason why a demon had abruptly appeared inside the city was because of this item.

I check if there is any other [Short Horn] in this city just in case, but there's none.
I try to search for it in the entire territory, but it only returns freeze-like sound, so I search in turn while limiting the range. Since I can't search the inside the Item Box and Holding Bag (of other people), this is only for peace of mind, but it's better than not doing it.

I put the Short Horn into my storage, and begin the work of helping the injured people.

◇

First, to the luxurious carriage. There are four survivors inside this carriage. There's a torn-off cart on top of the overturned carriage.
Since it'd be too conspicuous if I lift it, I blow the cart away with Short Stun. I secretly hold the carriage's body so that it doesn't shake.

I get on the carriage's top and look inside. It seems that they're all unconscious. There are a boy and a girl with black hairs of around 10 years old, a smart-looking woman past her twenties wearing civil official clothes. And a 15 years old pink haired girl wearing a dress. Arisa's hair is also like that, but pink... is this a manga!

Even though the dress girl probably doesn't hear the retort inside my mind, she's waking up.

She seems to be still feeling hazy.

"Black hair? He, ro, sama?"

The girl only murmured so and fainted again.

This is my first encounter with the princess of the small Rumooku kingdom, Menea.

Part 14 - Gururian City Disturbance (3)

Satou's here. There are people who say that the history of mankind is a history of war. I remember feeling that it's real when I watch a video showing world map and pie chart of outbreak of wars around the world.

Even in the parallel world, humankind's acts don't change.

◇

"In praise of defeating the demon who had attacked the city. The viceroy of Gururian city awards you this medal."

The bald civil official who's standing next to the young viceroy reads the award aloud. This is the audience room inside Gururian city castle. It's only about a quarter as wide as the one in Muno city, but there are twenty heavy soldiers equipped with halberds lined up on both sides.
At this time, I had a carefree impression, "It's nice when it really feels like a castle~", but in truth, later Arisa told me that the viceroy guards were reinforced as a precaution against me.

The only one inside the audience room is me. The other members are waiting in another room. I'm unarmed since I've given the fairy sword and the short cane to Arisa.

And then, the meeting with the viceroy ends without any problem and I withdraw.
In the end, the viceroy only said, "It was arduous."

◇

After leaving the audience room, I'm guided by a maid to a different room than the one Arisa and the others are.
There's the bald civil official from earlier inside. He's the consul of Gururian city.

"Sir Pendragon, I can't thank you enough for your assistance on the occasion. Your help is admirable."
"Even though I'm of the lowest ranked noble, I'm still one of Shiga kingdom's nobility. I was just fulfilling my duty."

We get down to the business after the regular greetings.
I talk about the state of the demon that has attacked Muno city, and the scales of its army. Even though they've known the detail from the duke, it's better to check on the fact. Continuing on, we're comparing it with the demon that has attacked Gururian city.

"I do not understand. I cannot read the demon's intention."
"That's right is it, it's a different story if it has thoroughly prepared armies to attack like in Muno city, but there's no meaning in just rampaging around in the city."

Since there's that item, it might have only been a diversion for the rampage. I don't report

the thing about the magic tool [Short Horn]. Since I don't know the character and ability of the viceroy, I won't report an item this dangerous. If the information about it carelessly spread, it'd be scary if witch hunts happened. Arisa also opposed in reporting it.

"Sir Pendragon, won't you tell me your opinion?"
"It might be a diversion, or possibly a way for implanting fears in the people."

The consul has probably expected my answer. He's nodding solemnly.
Actually, when I was searching during the wait for the audience earlier, short horn demons had appeared in other cities. I haven't confirmed if they've been exterminated, but there should be people who can defeat them in this season of martial arts tournament.

Afterwards, we finished our talk after exchanging some opinions.
The viceroy's butler hands me an invitation for banquet before I head back. Even though I've intended to take Pochi and the others along to go on Gugurian city trying food around, keeping the nobles company is troublesome.

◇

When I get back to the waiting room, the people who greet me are not only Arisa and the others. I've expected lady Karina and her maids, but there are also some unknown women. They're probably not servants of the viceroy since they're wearing poor clothes. When I check on their stats, they're slaves with [No Master] displayed.

"Chevalier Pendragon-sama, I'm sorry for my impoliteness the other day. I thank you for saving me during the demon's attack."

I wonder who? I don't remember helping her though?

"There was a cart carriage for slaves that fell down on the site earlier right, she was on it she said."

I see. But impoliteness--that's right, isn't she the part of the group who asked me to hand over mithril sword in Bollhart city.
However, why is she a slave? When I ask her, she replies in vexation.

"Actually, we were deceived by the weaselkins that day."

Her words aren't to the point, but, "We followed the weaselkins when they said that they had magic swords.", "They asked 30 gold coins for the magic sword.", "Since we only had five gold coins, we agreed to have a loan contract for the sword until the tournament was over.", that seems to be the case, I wonder where is the deceiving part?

"The scam was after that. We went straight to the Daregan city, but we were attacked by tigerkins and lionkins thieves and got the magic sword stolen."
"Were they real thieves?"
"If they were real, then my master and me would have already been killed. When we returned to Bollhart city, we met the weaselkin that had loaned us the magic sword. He saw

through the fact that the magic sword was stolen. When I think about it again, he obviously knew that we didn't have the magic sword."

Isn't it paranoia?
The weaselkin would know that they were attacked by the thieves if they see their tattered clothes, and there might be those kind of chivalrous thieves who didn't kill their victims.

"That, you see."

Arisa adds the fact that the women who are on the same carriage are telling similar stories. As for the young nobles, they seem to have been sold to a mine city on the nearby small kingdom.
The women were taken here by lady Karina who appealed directly to the viceroy, or rather the consul. 'They've become slaves and don't know if their masters taken to the mine city have died, don't you feel sorry for them,' she said.

"If this story is true, this won't end in just the weaselkins getting caught, but a war against the weaselkins kingdom won't it?"

No wait, the weaselkins might be instigating someone to go to war against them instead. There seem to be war factions among the weaselkins. According to the story from the drinking bout with the merchants last night, it had been 15 years since the weaselkin merchants entered the dukedom.
Around 18 years ago, there were 7-9 kingdoms on the border of the dukedom, and there were principalities of lizardkin and tigerkin beyond those kingdoms. The weaselkins has swallowed those demi-humans kingdoms and became big, and they're still growing their empire even now.
It seems that they've never meddled with human countries, but last year, they've utterly annihilated one of the small countries and touched the border of the dukedom.

Well, let's hope that even if war happens, it won't spread to Muno territory. There's no soldiers to dispatch, Nina-san should be able to judge well.

I'll leave the problem to the concerned person. I ring the bell that's on the table to call the maid who's standing by outside the room, and pass her a letter for the consul. It's hard to orally convey the content of the letter. It's up to the consul if the girl can be meet.

◇

"Nevertheless, this sure is a world with many troubles."
"Fantasy world is like this you know."

Right now, I'm with Arisa on a jewelry shop near the viceroy castle. Of course it's for the banquet tonight. Arisa said, "Your clothes is already quite noble-like, but there aren't enough decorations.", so we went to buy some accessories. I only had wristwatch in the original world since I liked it simple; I didn't know what to choose, so I brought Arisa along.

The ones who will attend the banquet tonight are lady Karina and me. I can't bring slaves or

demi-humans, so there's only Nana among my companions that I could take along, but since the viceroy's wife has Status Check skill, I ask lady Karina instead. The wife is only level 4, so the Status Check skill level is low and can only know name, but there's no need to take the risk. I have to learn the nature magic [Fake Patch] quickly.

I check on the accessories that Arisa and the shopkeepers have recommended, but there's nothing that fancy me. The accessories in this world are fundamentally rough. Most of the goods are all about seeing the limit on how many jewels or gold can be put on it.

If the banquet isn't tonight, I'd make one myself.

I check on the market price while ignoring Arisa's and the shopkeeper's conversation. Processed goods are more expensive after all. I've saved a lot of raws of amber, corundum, and zircon when I discover the veins by chance. I also have other ores like jade and crystal, I want to make magic tools for polishing or learn the mountain magic, [Polish].

In the end, I picked "Something that won't embarrass me even if I meet the viceroy." The 30 gold coins spent are truly wasteful.

◇

When I'm going to the room that the viceroy has prepared, a maid of this mansion is waiting for me, and says that there's a visitor for me.
The other party is the pink-haired princess and her companions. I've originally intended to meet her, so this is convenient. I tell the maid that I consent, and go meet them together with Arisa. I've already told all the informations about the princess and her companions to Arisa beforehand.

"Sir Pendragon, I want to thank you for saving me from the dangerous situation in this occasion."

Menea Rumooku is a princess of one of the small kingdom bordering the dukedom. She's 16 years old. Level 9, she has summoning magic skill. It's quite rare. Her waist-long loosely-waved pink hair, and emerald colored pupils are followed with chiseled face that's not too deep. Her height is only around 150cm, but her waist is thin, and her breasts are big. They're C-cup on the brink of D-cup. If our standings aren't different, I'd have wanted to court this beautiful girl in 2-3 years.

It was originally planned that she, as the third princess, was to marry the prince of a small kingdom, but the kingdom of her partner was destroyed by the weaselkins and the prince had died. Therefore, for the sake of meeting her next marriage partner, she's going to study in the the place where there are a lot of Shiga kingdom nobles, Kayou Royal Academy. Of course the academy is located in the royal capital.

From the knights and subordinates that have accompanied her until here, half have died from the demon attack, and the remaining three are being healed of their serious injuries in Tenion temple.

The wise-looking woman past 20 years old wearing civil official-like clothes who's standing behind the princess seems to be her attendant, she's called Poni-san. Her level is 7, her skills are [Negotiation], [Spy], and [Etiquette]. The spy skill is too suspicious.

So far so good, the problem is her black-haired attendants.

First, the boy gives his name. He has longish hair even though he's a boy, with biggish black eyes, he's 10 years old. His level is 1. His skill is only [Arithmetic]. His height is 132 cm. It's slightly lower than the average. He's the so-called [Girly boy], you can only see a girl when you look at his face. He's wearing girl clothes too.
Arisa can't leave it alone, so he must be a true boy. In fact, she's muttering, "Not bad, it'd be nice if the hair is shorter", beside me.

"I'm Aoi Haruka. Thank you for the help."

I wonder if it's Aoi Ryo or Haruka?

"I'm Yui Akasaki. I work as an idol. Onii-san, do you recognize my face?"

Akasaki Yui? She has shoulder-length black hair, and black pupils, she's 13 years old. Her level is 2. Her skill is only [Acting]. There are no Singing and Dancing (skills)? Her height is 149 cm. Her breasts are about B-cup. It's probably quite big for her age. However, even though she says that she's an idol, I've never seen her. I peep at Arisa, it looks like she doesn't know either.

"Yui, you're being rude to chevalier-sama. Speak the words properly."

Poni-san rebukes Yui's language, but it seems she doesn't look like she's going to change it.
With lip reading skill, I see that she's been speaking in Japanese all this time, but what I've heard is in Shiga kingdom language. Poni-san tells me later that with the translation ring the girl is wearing, her words are translated to Shiga kingdom.

It can be understand from the two's name that they're Japanese--they should be transported people, but they don't even have the [Self-Status] skill that any reincarnated or transported person should have according to Arisa, let alone unique skills. There's a possibility that they could hide it like me, but they might be the never-before-seen fourth type.

"So, which Japan are you coming from? Is it like this child's Great Rich Japan Empire? Or like my Southern Japan Federation? You can't be from the Northern Japan Republic right?"

I see, so it's come to this.

Poker Face skill is doing a good job today too.

Part 15 - Various Japanese People

Satou's here. I'm lumping the Japanese people together, but from color of udon to dialect, there are various differences in the east, west, south and north of Japan. I wonder if it's because of the information-oriented society, those special characteristics have been fading away in recent years, it's quite sad.

◇

The princess' entourages, Yui and Aoi pondered if me, who's called Satou, and has black hair and black eyes, is a Japanese. It doesn't seem that they're aware of Arisa's name.

The girl before me, Yui, is summoned from Southern Japan Federation in a country separated to north and south. The kind of country's setting that's often found in fictitious military stories. It seems to be a real country from what she's said, I guess I shouldn't say 'setting' out loud.
However, I've thought that I could easily go home if I just go to Saga empire, but if there are parallel worlds, I have to rethink my plan. Although from the start, I don't intend to go back until after the livelihood of Arisa, Liza and the others are guaranteed here, so it's fine.

"By Japan, do you mean the illustrious country referred by hero-sama?"
"Satou-san isn't from one?"
"My house has always given the name of the eldest son, Satou, for generations long. It's said that our ancestor is a Saga empire hero, but there's no hero called Satou if we trace back the generations of Saga empire's hero, so it's probably a fake story."

This setting is finally used. I thought that I wouldn't have the chance to use it even though I had prepared it. Supported with deception skill, it seems that Yui believes me.

Arisa speaks to Yui from my side.

"Hey, what kind of country is Southern Japan Federation?"
"Hm? It's an amazing country you know, there are mass of irons flying in the air, a lot of them fly until the heaven, it's bright even during the night."
"Hee, are there a lot of delicious food?"
"Fufuhn~, right eh, there are a lot of things that you've never eaten before, like--"

Apparently, it seems to be a different Japan than Arisa's own. When they bring up the subject to the Aoi boy, he's also started talking about
various matters.

While listening to the three's conversation, I talk to princess Menea.
They wouldn't have come here just to make sure if I'm another Japanese.

"Your highness, I've thought that only Saga empire can summon heroes, are these girls taking refuge from the empire?"
"No, it's different. These girls were summoned by our kingdom."

"P, princess. E,err, chevalier-sama, please keep the talk just now a secret, please."

I didn't think that she would answer frankly.

Still, it's not good to disclose such information to nobles from other kingdom right. Miss Poni hurriedly stopped the princess, but the essential point had been said.

Of course, I don't intend to tell this to anyone, but I'll bully them a little and get more informations.

"I really want to keep this a secret, but since this is concerning the matter of national defense, I have no choice but to tell this to my master and the royalties."

Poni-san who thinks that my statements is really reasonable, moans with, "au au", and cannot find any points to oppose it. It looks like she's not an excellent politician like Arisa and Nina-san. If it's those two, they would immediately try to bargain until I could be kept silent.

"Ufufu, Satou-sama, please don't bully us too much, you will keep it a secret."

The princess declared so confidently.
I wonder what's her basis?

◇

"Satou-sama is a retainer of the neighboring baron Muno territory's lord aren't you."
"Even though I'm a retainer (of a baron), I'm of the lowest ranked honorary Chevalier."

Right now, I'm alone with the princess at a garden's arbor. The place can be seen from the room we've just been earlier. Thickets are hiding the place we're sitting, so people can't see us.

When she invited me to a walk, I thought that she was going to talk something that Yui and Aoi shouldn't hear, but I was surprised that she even left Poni-san in the room.

When we arrived at the arbor, I took a seat in front of her, but she deliberately went to sit beside me.
We're not talking about the summoning, but only about me. It looks like she's heard a lot of rumor about me when she was visiting her knights, so she becomes interested in me.

It can't be that she's seducing me?

--Not. I cut off the momentary convenient imagination of mine. Even though it's a small kingdom, there's no reason why the kingdom's princess would fall for me.

Let's return back the topic to about summoning.

"It seems that her highness believes that I would keep it a secret, why is that?"
"Even if I come from a small kingdom, I'm still a princess. I can discern people who's trying to

gain favors."

Hoo? That is amazing.

"I don't feel that Satou-sama is going to make use of those girls and me. The reason why you bullied us was because you were trying to get information from me right?"

Yes, that's exactly right.
Then, let's frankly ask her.

"Your highness."
"Menea."

Taking my momentum, the princess overlaps her word with mine. Your face is close princess.

"Please call me Menea. Satou-sama."
"I understand, Menea-sama."

She seems satisfied with me calling her name, and shortly goes back to sit. She doesn't seem to care that I use 'sama'.

"Is Rumooku kingdom able to summon Japanese people since olden days?"
"No, the one who summoned them was my aunt, the king's litle sister, her highness Yuriko."

She casually used 'was' huh. Additionally, "Yuriko", means that she was a reincarnated person huh?

"It's just as you've guessed. Her highness Yuriko was a reincarnated Japanese person. She said that she was murdered by a thug when she was an elementary schooler in her previous life. She declared to the people that she met the god when she was reincarnating; she should have been revered as a saintess, but due to her ominous colored hair and pupils, no one believed her words."

Ominous color huh, it must be violet like Arisa.

"In our country, the direct line of the royal family who had pink hair like me was regarded the most, so her situation was difficult."

This is something that I hear later, but the reason why pink hair is regarded the most is because when her ancestor meets the ancestor king Yamato, the ancestor king declares, "Pink hair is the treasure of the world. Hereafter, Shiga kingdom will enter eternal non-aggression treaty with this country." Isn't Yamato-san a person of the olden days? I somehow imagine the person to be like someone from Akihabara....

"Her highness Yuriko asked for three wishes, [Power to Connect Worlds], [Eternal Youth], and [Beauty], to the god. However, I don't know if she's angered the god, Beauty is the only thing she doesn't get."

It's like Lulu's case I guess. She couldn't have imagined that the world had different standard of looks.
However, I feel like the other two skills are too different from [Power to Connect Worlds]. Did she intend to go back and forth between the previous world and here?

"When she used her [Power to Connect Worlds] for the first time, she summoned a monster that massacred nearby maids."

Afterwards, to see if it could be used for military purpose, she used [Power to Connect Worlds] after preparing the knights to stand by, but nothing came out beside one rabbit.

"Just as that happened, weaselkin magicians visited the castle while carrying a certain item."

Weasels again huh. They're active behind the scene like the demons.

"They knew about her highness [Power to Connect Worlds] from somewhere. They tried to sell the king the magic tool they had brought along, saying that it could be used with her highness' power to summon heroes."

At first the king showed his disapproval, but he got persuaded by the skillful talks of the weaselkins. It was also immediately after the annihilation of the neighboring small kingdom by the weaselkins, so he couldn't exactly refuse them.

And then, Japanese people began to get summoned, but--

"Among all the Japanese people who had been summoned, no one was as strong or had unique skills like the hero."

There's also possibility of them hiding their ability, but the princess denies while saying that it's absolutely impossible since there's a curse that won't let them disobey the summoner. Unlike the king's little sister, no one met the god. It's the same pattern as me.

"By no one, that means there aren't just the two girls?"
"Yes, there are total eight people who had been summoned."

The first and the second summoned ones began to scream eccentrically immediately after they had been summoned and tried to get close to the royalties, so they were executed by the guard knights. They might had just tried to understand their situation while speaking in Japanese language, pitiable.

The third one is a man in his late teens, he slipped out of the castle the day he was given the translation ring and seemed to have died in the forest, eaten by monsters. When the soldiers had caught up to him, the monsters were devouring him, and only his hand with the translation ring on the finger was left.

The fourth one is a man in his 30s. He attacked a noble who was on an inspection during his battle training, and got executed. After living peacefully in Japan, he had to undergone military training every day to the point of vomiting blood, he went mad.

When I overlap his situation with mine, a chill run downs my spine. If I were to be left alone in a wasteland without unique skills, I would probably end up similar to him.

The fifth one is a woman on the later half of her twenties, after she was given translation ring and explained of her situation, she committed suicide on the evening of that day.

"Why did she kill herself?"
"We honestly told her that there was no way to return her home."
"Is there none? Couldn't she just use that [Power to Connect Worlds] again?"
"The magic tool Motara from the weaselkins did help connect to [Parallel World Japan], but the connected world was always different every time. They didn't know why it could not connect to the same world."

The princess is talking detachedly, but when she's talking about the weaselkins, her words get a bit harsh.

"And then, the sixth was Aoi, and the seventh was Yui."

She cuts her words there.

"When the last, eighth person was summoned, a senior demon attacked the castle that day, her highness Yuriko and the people involved with the summoning were all killed. The eighth summoned person was abducted by the demon, and half of my country was burned in half jest by the demon."

It seems Oyugock dukedom provided funds to help rebuild the kingdom. It was the duke who want Yui and Aoi to go with her to study together at Oritsu academy.

And then, it seems that the upper nobles of Rumooku and Shiga kingdom have known about this.

I finally understand the reason why she could declare "I will keep it a secret" now. There's no meaning anyway if the people I would report already know. There's a high possibility that baron Muno doesn't know about this, but as a lord he is, he's a legitimate senior noble.

I'm bothered with the whereabout of that eighth person, but I wonder why she's talking about it like this?

"Reason is it? There was an oracle. It was prophesied that I would meet my destined person in this kingdom. And I think that you are my destined person."

Umm, I don't understand what you mean, you know?
Are you sharing your secret to your destined person or something?

She drew her body closer to me while spinning her words together with entranced sigh. Her hands which she's put on my upper arm are trembling.

The stare from her passionate blue eyes draw men in. She's a bit young, but I'm charmed by

her alluring gaze and small gestures. Above all, the abundant swelling that are being pressed on my upper arm are nice. It might be fine to get swept away by the atmosphere like this, and when I think about it a bit, she's attractive.

However, I wonder why. Reasons returns to her eyes even though they have been so passionate.

As if being lured by that, my interest also rapidly declines.

These following three messages are displayed a lot in queue of my log.

>Mind Magic: Resisted Calm Field
>Mind Magic: Resisted <<Impossible Cage>>
>Mind Magic: Resisted Frank Principle (Flat Rule)

It was Arisa huh.

It seems that she's used her unique skill that's finally available again, Never Give Up.

The evidence is the, [Mind Magic: Failed in Resisting Frank Principle (Flat Rule)], that are in the log.

I'll tell her GJ this time. Since I was overwhelmed by the atmosphere. I really do have to play around to vent out once in a while after all.

Part 16 - Gururian City Night

Satou's here. During the time of bubble economy long ago, it seemed that it was normal to treat your lover with full course meal in every memorial day. I don't think that I'm lucky to grow up during the recession, but it looks like people who've been in the good times have their own shares of problem too.

◇

"Well then, everyone, please enjoy the specialties of Gugurian."

The viceroy says so signaling the start of the banquet.

The people in this dining room are the viceroy, his wife and his retainers, gentlemen and ladies--who are of course nobles with peerages. The guests are princess Menea, and Poni-san who acts as her escort,
and also lady Karina and me. The influential people in the city are only invited when it's a buffet party.
By the way, only adults are allowed to participate in the banquet and party, their children aren't.

The dining table is decorated with flowers, and two maids accompany each guest. The tablewares are silver knives, spoons and forks. Beside the knife that looks like an extremely common dagger, the spoon and the fork are like the ones used in the previous world. There is only one set of the tablewares for each plate, but it gets exchanged with new ones when you've finished your meal it seems.
The room is lit with magic light. It's not with magic tools, but a magician is putting out light balls. That should be the case considering magic balls are occasionally added from the corner the room.

Wine-like liquor is poured into the glasses. This is the first time I've ever seen glasses as containers since I come here. It seems to be famous products of the dukedom called Oak Glass. According to lady Karina's story, there's a life-sized glass mirror in the women waiting room.

Lady Karina's clothes looks so gorgeous, you wouldn't think that they're made in hurry. I'm the one who pay for it, but it's scary to look at the bill. The clothes have spaciously shown neckline, and the demonic--I mean, emphasized breasts, it's also not only decorated with silver and golden threads, but even gems are mounted in every important places. It's probably not preferable for the invitee to wear clothes that are too gaudy, but since the viceroy's wife is wearing even gaudier dresses, so it should be alright. Since the topic about sense of beauty could be controversial, I don't really want to talk about it, but it's also 'Peacock' in this world too huh, I'll leave it at that.

The first plate that I've assumed to be cold from the beginning is light green soup. It's delicious even though it's cold, potatoes soup-like.

Starting from that, various plates with dishes like meat pudding, boiled trout, pilaf-like dish, baked pheasant, and fillet meat steak are presented out in turns. Aren't there too many main plates?
Regardless of the main course, side dishes like vegetables, and entremet are put on different plates. Breads are also served in a basket, this is the first time I've seen ones that aren't black breads. They're not puffing hot, but it's been a long time since I've eaten white breads.

I want to use chopsticks when I'm eating the trout, but the nobles nearby seem to have got used to it, they break the trout and eat it without problem.
However, half of them who aren't able to do it well are assisted by the maids behind by leaving only the white meat for the nobles. Diligent maids are too wonderful.

Of course, I ask for help too.

Apparently she's an inexperienced maid, I could hear, "Ah", and, "B, bone-san, please don't bring it here.", such slightly fun screams from behind. Since she said it in low voice, guests who don't have attentive ears skill probably can't hear it. I did not think that I would be this glad for getting attentive ears skill.

I'd like to have Liza eat the pheasant dish. Let's buy it in the market, and make the same dish. I have to thank the chefs for the good food in the kitchen, and get them to teach me delicious recipes later!

The overall volume of food is too much, though it's not like I can't eat them all, but since it seems to be normal to leave leftovers, I'm relieved. Even in glutinous Japan, I don't think I've ever left this much. The gormandizer lady Karina eat them all up.

During the banquet, people around me are having conversations while eating slowly, and it's unexpectedly difficult for people who can't eat slowly.
Moreover, lady Karina is too engrossed in eating she tends to forget about the conversation, and has a hard time to follow it. Since she's unfamiliar with this position, it can't be helped. If I haven't followed Arisa's recommendation and got taught of etiquette by well-informed maid-san beforehand, I might show some shameful behaviors too.

Arisa and the others are on eating tour around Gururian city as scheduled. I'm expecting their result enthusiastically since they would absolutely find shops with delicious cooked rice.

The last dessert isn't gururian (ohagi), but sweetened chestnut. It's called gold sugar, and seems to be promoted at Gururian confectionery. It's really very tasty.

After the dinner, we move to a different room to have pleasant chats. Men and women are in separate rooms. The talks are frank since there are only same sex.

Since a gentleman at the prime of his life who claims to be baron Muno's childhood friend is talking, I don't get left behind alone. The baron is like that since long ago after all.
I got uncomfortable when the topic changes to silver masked hero who has appeared in Seryuu city and Muno city, but the impressions are generally favorable. 'Maybe his true

nature is someone who has served the previous Saga empire's hero', such theory is prominent. If he's the predecessor hero's friend, shouldn't he be around 70-90 years old then? I want to retort with that, but I restrain myself.

Since I want to change the topic, I try to talk about the story of the young nobles at the dwarves' hometown.

The atmosphere gets a bit heavy since it's not really a good topic to talk about, but I get some informations. There are hundreds of noble houses in the dukedom alone, and more than 100 young nobles don't succeed their houses and become commoners each year. There is no strict rule that mandates nobles to fall and become commoners, but if one of their sibling inherit the house then they have to leave. If they're minors then they'd be still under care of their parents and remain in the house for the time being.

The magic swords search seem to be vain struggles of the young nobles who don't want to become commoners, even if each of their houses issues prohibition for it, there are always someone who breaks it.
It seems that entering into the duke's imperial guard is quite an honor, and during the service, they'd be treated as temporary nobles and the fall into commoners is postponed. The person with talent could be conferred with medal and become a honorary knight.

◇

When we get back to the banquet, lady Karina and me are invited to a tea break together by the viceroy's son. He's not actually the viceroy's legitimate son, so there's no problem even if I refuse him. However, there's something that interest me so I decide to accept the invitation.
Lady Karina is also going to accompany me. I wonder why? She's being meek and quiet today unlike her usual behavior. The thing that's different from the usual her is that she's not wearing Raka now huh? If she was always like this, I wouldn't have avoided her.

"Nice to meet you, sir Pendragon. Thank you very much for accepting my sudden invitation."
"Thank you for the invitation. The daughter of the viceroy is famous for her wide knowledge. I'd like to meet her once at least."

With my reply, the girl and the boys that follow her harden. She's wearing boys clothes after all, and the clothes matches her well, so she really looks like a feminine boy.

"H, how did you know?"
"I understand from the frame. There are various differences between men and women. The way to distinct it is a secret of my house, so it breaks my heart that I have to tell you I cannot show it."

I think casual talk matches her better, although I don't think that's how she naturally is. The bluff about frames is something I know from the net.
They are the same girl and boys with matching uniforms who have been watching the fight back in the noon. The other boys are children of the viceroy's retainers. Looks like they're

children of the nobles from the banquet earlier.

I've accepted the invitation not because they're powerful nobles. It's because they're students of young division of Oritsu royal academy. Princess Menea that I've met yesterday seem to be studying in the advanced division of Oritsu royal academy.
I probably would visit Oritsu academy to gather information someday, so I'll try to have connections even a bit here.

"Satou-sama is amazing even though you're so young. How are you able to be that skillful in swordplay and magic?"

The daughter of the viceroy introduces herself as Ririna, she's fervently speaking about how amazing my fight with the demon is. At first she calls me, "Chevalier Pendragon", or, "Sir Pendragon", but somehow it's changed to "Chevalier Satou", and then, "Satou-sama".
When her way of calling changed, the line of sights of lady Karina and the boys that follow Ririna became dangerous. Leaving aside lady Karina, it's not my plan to be hated by the followers, so I take care as to keep my distance from lady Ririna.
Their attitudes quickly changes when I verbally promise to teach them the basic of magic someday. I don't know when is that someday, so I write it in the memo so that I won't forget it.

The viceroy's office term is only for five years, but since her father is a capable person, it has been decided that he would move to Kwoka city afterward.

◇

"Satou-sama, you've promised to teach me about magic! Please wake up."

The figure of us sleeping together in a bed spreads in front of lady Ririna who has come into the room without knocking. Moreover, everyone is wearing pajama that Arisa has made for seven people, it seems to look like underwear from the eyes of the people here.

"Satou-sama, a, au, d, dirty desu!!"

It seems to be too stimulating for the 13 years old her.
And then a lady maid who serves her comes to apologize for the impoliteness, and closes the door.

"What was that?"
"The viceroy's daughter, lady Ririna, 13 years old. She's a talented girl who's attending the young division of Oritsu royal academy."

Arisa's voice is flat. Mia who usually sleeps in also looks at me harshly while looking sleepy. Liza turns around and goes back to sleep again indifferently. Pochi and Tama are tossing around on the bed. Defeated by their cuteness, I pat their stomaches while lying. The two are letting out comfortable sounds from their throats.

"You there, stop flirting."

"Nn, seiza."

Arisa and Mia also take seiza postures and look straight to my face.
I wonder what is this? This 'husband who has been blamed for cheating'-like composition?

"I haven't done anything shameful you know? I got to know her when she invited me together with lady Karina to a tea break. I promised to teach her about magic someday, didn't she just want to do it immediately?"
"Gunununu."
"Mwu."

Lulu is also looking here with teary eyes, but it seems she's been persuaded somehow.
After breakfast, the mood became strange since lady Ririna and princess Menea had come intruding, but I got pass through it somehow.

I prioritize in teaching magic for lady Ririna and her followers, and the princess amiably concedes. Arisa said, "There's no fool who would make enemies of influential nobles of a large country." Looks like viceroys are amazing.
Even though I said 'teaching magic', I just asked each of them to perform magic, sensed it with magic perception, and pointed out their weakness and strength with the knowledge from the magic theory books. They thank me greatly somehow, but I think anyone would be able to do this much. They're probably happy because it's the words from [A magician who's defeated a demon].

◇

Since princess Menea was absent when I came to meet her after the teaching, I went to the town with Arisa and the others. I wasn't able to resist the appeal of cooked white rice and grilled fish.

"Fufuhn, the way to cook white rice has been properly mastered! By Lulu!"

It seems she was taught by the chef from the restaurant they visited yesterday.

"They willingly teach you huh."
"It's give and take! I traded it with tempura recipe!"

I see, after a while, we could eat tempura in this city when we visit it again huh. GJ Arisa.
I make promise with Lulu to have her teach me how to cook white rice later. Of course, I intend for Lulu to make it first. It's so that Lulu's effort doesn't get to waste, but anyone would yearn for freshly cooked rice from a beautiful girl right.

I bought [Float] scroll from the magic shop. I did not bought the other scrolls since I had them already.

When we get back to the viceroy mansion, maid-san tells us that they've booked us seats for the ship that will depart to the dukedom capital tomorrow. A carriage that carries five sacks of rice and one sack of glutinous rice ordered by Arisa has arrived. There's one sack of

adzuki beans too. You've bought too much Arisa.

When we are preparing for the departure, princess Menea comes over.
I've thought that she's going to continue the talk about heroes from yesterday, but she's just confirming my contact address. I tell her that we're in the middle of a journey to the labyrinth city, and I promise her that I will send a letter to Oritsu royal academy addressed for princess Menea after we have decided the place to stay there.
This is the first time I'm going to exchange letter with a beautiful girl--No wait, I've already promised once with Zena-san. I should send a letter to Zena-san.

Lastly, I check on one thing I've forgotten to ask the princess yesterday.
When was the eighth person kidnapped?

"More than one month ago. Do you remember the day when many meteors fall from the sky? It was the day before that."

That kidnapped eighth person wasn't me right? Right?

Part 17 - Ship Travel

Satou's here. I imagined that Europe have prejudice against octopus which they call devil fish, but I was surprised when I heard that it was eaten normally in Italy and Spain. Akashiyaki is delicious, but I prefer normal takoyaki.

◇

I'm waving my hands on top of the departing ship. It's not only princess Menea and her escorts that have come to see us off, but even the viceroy couple and miss Ririna.

There were imprudent young nobles and hooligans that they had hired aiming for Liza's spear waiting in the harbor, but the viceroy soldiers skilfully arrested them before they could cause harm to us. It seemed miss Karina's maids had notified the viceroy beforehand after they heard about some disturbing rumors.
The nobles had probably seen Liza's spear during the fight with the demon yesterday, but they were really confident if they thought they could go against her even after seeing that fight.

I want to leave miss Karina too if possible, but my reputation would become bad if I do leave my employer's daughter, so I give up.

"Fufufuhn, you've raised and collected flags of the new character huh! She should just disappear after this."

New character.... Please don't liken a person with characters. Today's Arisa is a bit dark. Is she still minding about the things at the arbor yesterday?

Last night, before we slept, Arisa and I exchanged informations about our Japans, and about 70% of it matched. I had thought that she liked minor animes, but in Arisa's Japan, they were super popular works that even non-Otaku knew.

"Are you still thinking about the eighth person?"

Arisa who seems to be worried about me that has lost in thought calls out.

Yesterday, I was a bit upset, but even if I'm the eighth, there was no particular merit or demerit, so I decided not to mind about it. Since the reincarnated person who could do summoning has died, a situation where more Japanese people overflows here is unlikely anyway.
For the time being, I've told the princess that the summoned hero of Saga empire could be sent back to his original world. I'll pray for the possibility of Yui and Aoi going back to their worlds would increase even for a bit.

Arisa pokes-pokes my head lightly, and we go together to Pochi and the others who are clamoring on the bow while looking at the water surface.

◇

"I've cleared another thing that I've always wanted to do in the previous life~"

Arisa spreads her arms on the bow while I'm supporting her waist. It looks like a scene from a famous western movie. I knew the title since it was a masterpiece, but unfortunately I had never watched it.

"Umm, chevalier-sama, it's dangerous so, could you...."

The area of the bow we are in is actually off-limit, but I unreasonably ask to enter it.
Since the lone tour guide who's taking care of us is looking troubled, I take Arisa who seems satisfied back to the general deck.

This ship's deck is wide enough to hold four carriages. Although since there are other things like the masts, it can only hold two in actual. There's only our wagon right now. This ship consists of three layers, the top one has the captain's cabin and our guest rooms. Miss Karina and her maids are in different room of course. The other two layers are for domestic animals like the horses, cargo room, and the sailors' rooms.

I was worried that everyone would get seasick for their first ship voyage, but beside miss Karina's maids who are downed, all other members are fine. Everyone is saying that it's far better than the vibration on the wagon. Let's give some motion-sickness medicines to the maid-san later.

It's 300 kilometers away until the capital, but since we're using a ship chartered from the viceroy this time, we would reach it in just two days. It would take 3-4 days if it was a general ship, since they'd need to make stops at the cities along the way.

"It's boring desuwa."
"Karina-sama, how about exploring the ship's interior together with Pochi and the others?"

Karina-sama barged in when I was relaxing on the sofa that the tour guide had prepared on the deck.
There are only Liza and me here. The other members have gone exploring. I didn't think that even Lulu would also go, but since it was the first time she had boarded such large ship, it couldn't be helped. I'm the only one who's sitting on the sofa. Since there were three seats, I encouraged Liza to also sit, but she stood obstinately like a sentry and wouldn't sit.

I don't think that even miss Karina would try to pick a fight in this kind of place, but since I'm absorbed in map searching, I drive her away.

"My, even though such beautiful girl is visiting you, you immediately send her away?"
"I have no such intention, would you like to take a seat?"

I'm saying thing that I don't mean to.
I get irritated at miss Karina, but I don't show it on my face.

"So, would you not sign the letter from consul Nina?"
"I thought I had given the letter of refusal on the other day?"

Nina-san's letter was a request for me to become [Special Liaison Officer] from baron Muno territory. In short, I have to coax influential nobles in the dukedom to invest in baron Muno territory. As the compensation it was written that the honorary part of my peerage would be taken out, but since it was not worth it, I declined. If I carelessly accept it, I'm afraid that I'd get led around until I'm made to marry miss Karina.

"Why is it? If you become a chevalier, your children could inherit the peerage you know?"
"Even the honorary knight that I have now is too excessive for me. I don't think of anything beyond that."

Miss Karina looks dissatisfied with me who's not getting into it. Please stop inflating your cheeks like a child. The maid--err~ was it Pina-san?--is warning her as it's unbecoming of a lady.
Right at then, Pochi and Tama who have finished their exploring dive in.

"I'm home~.""Nano desu!"
"Yes, welcome home."

I gently catch the two and make them sit on the seats at both of my sides. Since they look thirsty, I advise them to drink the fruit water on the side table. Arisa comes back slightly late. Mia who has realized that my sides are already occupied clings from behind the sofa. Please stop rustling my hair.

"You're all getting clingy during the noon!"

Miss Karina accused so.
How rude! We're just a bit intimate.

Miss Karina is stamping the ground with her feet, but it seems she's discrete enough as not to utter, "Let's fight desuwa."

◇

"Look look! It's mermaid, mermaid!"

Why did you say it twice.
I look at where Arisa is pointing, they're certainly mermaids. The AR indicates that they're finmen tribe (Mermaid). It looks like they're aquatic demi-humans. There are also other tribe like fishmen or gillmen.

It seems the mermaids are gathering shellfish and prawn, and carry it to small boats with humans on it. It's completely different, but they remind me of ama-san divers doing cormorant fishing.

I look at the people on the small boat, the tour guide who has noticed it calls the small

boats here.
Since the story advances into buying of aquatic products, I go with Lulu to the ship's side.

The line-ups are shellfish that are as big as a tray, lobster-sized shrimps, and octopus with two meter long tentacles. There shouldn't be octopus in fresh water, but I guess I shouldn't bring real world common knowledge to a parallel world.
I buy shrimps for everyone's shares, several shellfish, and three octopus. It seems octopus are rarely eaten by people, the tour guide looks awfully surprised. It's delicious you know?

"Octopus~?"
"This guy, nano desu."

Pochi and Tama catch the octopus that has ran away from the bucket, but they're having a hard time with the tentacles coiling around them.

It seems Pochi is irritated with the tentacles that just won't come off, she begins biting on it. It might be delicious, but please stop biting it raw.

Tama has escaped somehow, and pricks the octopus that coils around Pochi with her claws. Stop enjoying it and help Pochi. Well, since her
harassed behavior looks cute, I do understand. However, I should help her soon.

"Satou."

Mia is calling me with pitiful voice from behind, when I turn around, she's also become a victim of the octopus. Leaving aside Pochi, Mia who gets entangled by the octopus' tentacles feels immoral-like, no good. Arisa also says, "Erofu is here." while helping her.
Lulu also helps, and the tentacles on Mia are torn off. Nana and Liza are helping Pochi.

"Sticky."

Mia tells her displeasure while looking really pitiful.
I ask the tour guide to draw water.

I hear Pochi screams, "Please help nano desu" behind. When I look behind, there are Pochi and Nana who have become black from the octopus' ink. Liza and Tama seemed to have avoided it.

I put up a partitioning screen, and the three octopus' victims are taking baths behind it. I put Air Curtain outside the screen so that it won't get stripped off. Rather than being troubled from them being seen, it's more so that they don't catch cold.

Mia and Pochi are going out of the screen to dry their bodies, but since there are other people's eyes, I tell them to wipe it with their own clothes and push them inside the screen. That's why it's inevitable I see naked body of Nana at that time. I have absolutely nothing to feel guilty about.

"Your lips, they're grinning."

"How rude."

I unintentionally put my hand on my lip from Arisa's words.

I've seen good things today, I decide to cook the octopus dish.
I ask the tour guide to borrow the kitchen. It's only inside the ship, and it's small. It might be better to cook it on the ship's deck with magic tools. I had made Heat Plate, referencing from Light Heat Plate, but since the only one who could regulate the temperature was me, it rarely got used during the camping.

Unfortunately, the only octopus dish that I could think of is boiled octopus sashimi that would fit in a bar, or vinegared one. I've thought of making takoyaki, but since I don't know how to make stock soup for the dough, I give up. Let's research it next time.
Since I feel that the rice that Lulu is cooking would slightly fail, I put up ingredients for making octopus pilaf. I soothe Lulu who's depressed, I don't expect her to make splendid cooked rice on her first try.

I ask Liza's and Nana's help to bring it to the deck, and we're having lunch under the blue sky. It's generally popular, but Pochi looks a bit disappointed, probably because it's not meat. I'd like you to endure since they'd be suspicious of the origin if we have grilled meat on the ship.

Since there's going to be a town near the place where we're anchoring this evening, maybe I should go shopping with a small boat there.

Tama and Liza are wildly eating the grilled shrimps without peeling it.
Maybe because it looks really delicious, Miss Karina begins to mimic them, but Pina-san the maid scolds her. The other two maids are engrossed with the meal, they don't even act as miss Karina caretakers. I wonder if the medicine is effective, miss Erina the maid who has been looking like she'd die this morning is stuffing her mouth full with the octopus pilaf.

It was worthwhile in making so much food since there are many gluttons here.

When I'm searching for [Short Horn] at the capital during the meal, I find more than 20 of it. I pray that the capital doesn't get destroyed until the ship arrives.

I wish that Hayuna, her child and the workshop of the viscount Shimen are safe.

Part 18 - Ship Travel (2)

Satou's here. I imagine gorgeous passenger ship when I hear 'Ship travel', but I've only ever ride a nighttime ferry. Since I mostly slept, I could only remember some random theme song that remained in my ears.

◇

"Bird~?"
"Bird-san nano desu!"

A birdman who's flying near the water surface as if gliding passes over the ship.
Pochi and Tama are waving their hands to the point as if it'd get torn off. It seems the birdman is also giving a service, he makes several turns and do a full revolution before flying away.

I'm afraid that the two will fall since they lean forward too much while waving their hands, but since Liza seizes the girdle, it's probably alright.
Even if they fall, there's [Float] that I've learned recently so it's fine, but there's no need for them to fall in the first place.

It's basically a leisure on the ship.

Yesterday, the ship was attacked by two aquatic monsters, but before we could go out, the gillmen soldiers who were escorting the ship cleaned it up. There was also a pirate group, river version, that was going to attack on the river branch, but I attacked them with Short Stun from afar, and their boat got capsized, the end.

Since it's generally peaceful like that, I continue practicing signal magic with Nana like before.
Mia and Arisa look dissatisfied, though they're not being hindrances because I persuade them that having someone that can receive the signal anytime is important. This person is being a nuisance instead.

"You're all clingy again this early in the day!"
"Karina-dono, I've thought that it's normal for married humans couple to get clingy? Besides, the two seem to be doing training for receiving signal magic. In my humble opinion, you should not disturb them."

Raka remonstrated Karina who was picking a quarrel. As expected of magic creature. It understands that we're doing signal magic.

"I want to do training too!"
"Since Karina-sama has Raka-dono, there is no need for training. I'll contact Raka-dono if anything happen."

Good grief, if lady Karina is going to be my practice partner, my line of sight would be at her

breasts no doubt. Arisa and Mia would say [Seiza] again.

"Right, right, it's unnecessary for young lady Karina who has the convenient magic tool. Now then, it's Arisa-chan's turn."

Arisa declares so while breathing heavily. What's this, card game!
When lady Karina was intruding, that Arisa took my short cane and did something on the deck's corner, it seems she was using [Signal] magic. The reason why she was breathing heavily was probably because used [Signal] even though she didn't have nature magic skill. She's a rash girl like always.

Mia claps her hands when she sees Arisa, takes a short cane from my bag, chant nature magic spell, and casts [Signal]. Mia is following Arisa huh.
It seems that Mia has successfully casted the magic, but far from breathing heavily, she falls from anemia. I was going to put her on the cabin to sleep, but she insisted to be here and slept on my lap.
Lulu who's beside the tea set looks at Mia enviously. I don't think it's something that warrant such envy. I feel that lady Karina's expression looks like Lulu, but I ignore it.

"Hey, I've struggled to be able to be the receiver, so start the training~."
"Okay, first, let's see the receiver's state using [Signal]. Give me your hands."
"Uy~."

Come to think of it, it's been awhile since I join hand with Arisa. They're small. I'm squishing it. When I'm playing with the small hands that have nothing to do with the training, Arisa is letting out strange voices like, "Au", or "Iyahn". She seems to be shy, like always, I don't understand the point that would make Arisa shy.
Since Mia scratches my knee while irritated, I stop playing around and go back to the training.

"First, it's a brief signal. Then, next is long signal."
"Okay, I know, I know."
"I know."

Oh, Mia is also participating huh. Please don't overdo it if your anemia is painful.

"Then, from now on is the real thing. Activating [Signal]."
"Hoi."
"Nn."

I've tried it for many times, but they can't receive it as well as Nana after all.
At that time, Pochi and Tama who have been looking at the birdman on the ship's broadside come back.

"Pizza~?" "Lap pillow nano desu~."

It seems Tama and the others are still affected by Arisa who eats 10 pizzas when I make mock pizza the other day. Looks like it's still stuck on Tama, she still says pizza while pointing

at my lap.
Maybe they want to mimic Mia who's sleeping on my lap, they gather both hands on the opposite knee and lie on it face down. No. That's not how you do sleeping on the laps.

Since the two who look at me poking Arisa's and Mia's hands say that they want to do it too, I make them spread their hands in line and poke it too.

I try to send various signals' interval and strength.

Ton, ton.

Piku, piku.

Oh?

This time, I try to send the signals without poking their hands with my finger.

Piko, piko.

Pochi's and Tama's ears are twitching matching the signal, they lean their heads while looking puzzled.

"Pochi, raise your hand if you receive my signal."
"Roger nano desu."

Ton, swoosh.
Silent. ...Ton, swoosh.
This is a bit interesting. However, it seems that she could only grasp short wave signal.

"Next, Tama okay."
"I'll manage somehow sir~"

That's wrong.
She got the vocabularies that Arisa had taught her mixed. She must have wanted to say, "Aye aye sir.".

Ton, swish.
Ton, swiswish.

You don't have to take strange poses when you get it.

Looks like Tama can receive both types of signals, but strangely her sensitivity is weaker than Pochi's, the range of signal strength that she could receive is narrow. That reminds me, Tama did find magic traps in the labyrinth eh.
I don't know if it's due to her race characteristic or her individual ability, but she's quite reliable.

With this, I could communicate with them even if we're separated. At the very least, the signal could be received from end to end of the ship, I'll check on the range when we get

down from the ship.
I decide on several urgent patterns at once. I'm worried Pochi and Tama wouldn't be able to remember signal that's too complex, but Arisa proposes to make Tama talks the signal out loud to Arisa, and so I agree with it. Afterward, Arisa would decipher the Morse signal.

I've thought that it's quiet, but it looks like Karina has shut her room and sleep while sulking. The maids seem to be free too, they're dozing off.

Ah, it's peaceful.

◇

"Now then, honored guests. Please close your eyes and wait. Please do not open it until I give you the signal."

The tour guide is making a speech to us who are sitting on the seats that have been prepared on the deck. The ship is going to enter a 3 kilometers-long cave soon. There's a legend that says this cave is penetrated by the ancient empire's magician who've made the canal using magic.

The reason why we're asked to sit and close our eyes is to make our eyes get accustomed to darkness to see the tourist attraction in the cave ahead.

"From now on, Meeru the batkin will steer the ship replacing the captain."

That was the man who was patrolling during the night yesterday. I've thought that he's an escort soldier, but he would steer the ship huh. They're probably using demi-human who could use echolocation to steer through the terrain in the unlit cave.

A small boat that comes out of the harbor in front of the cave is guiding our ship entering the cave. A person is using light signal to tell the people on the other side of the cave.
I see, since it could only hold one ship, they're regulating the traffic.

The sails on the ship are folded when it approaches the cave.
Warm wind is blowing from the frontward. If this is a fairy tale, it'd feel like entering cave straight into the stomach of a giant monster.
Of course, such thing doesn't happen and we uneventfully enter the cave. Soon after we enter the cave, the light dims. Of course, I'm the only one who open my eyes and observe various things. Everyone is obediently closing their eyes following the tour guide's instruction.

Since I have light intensity adjustment skill, I immediately get accustomed with dark places. It's truly convenient.

Ooh!

Even though the tour guide probably doesn't know the astonishment in my mind, he gives the signal.

"Now, everyone, please open your eyes slowly! This is the famous Phantom Firefly Cavern of Oak!"

I've seen it one step ahead, but it's quite a spectacle. Mosses on both sides to the ceiling of the cavern are casting faint lights in various colors, drawing mysterious gradation. It's like a nature's painting. Moreover, there are crystals located here and there reflecting the light, making it never dull. It's already quite beautiful with those alone, but there are even a lot of lights that look looks like fireflies flickering and dancing around.

What happen if emotional girls and little girls see such thing, it goes without saying.

"Glittering~? Flickering~?"
"Amazing nodesu! Master! Amaaziing nodesu!"

Pochi and Tama who are sitting beside me are getting too excited, they grab my shoulders and begin shaking it. My eyes is spinning.

"Beautiful."
"Amazing."

Arisa and Lulu are watching this magical scene as if their souls are stolen. The two get off the sofa and sit beside my feet. Of course they're not sitting directly on the deck's floor, but on soft feather cushions that the tour guide has prepared.
I think they're unaware that they've grasped my feet near them. It's a bit painful.

"It's beautiful, yes, truly beautiful."

Mia is muttering feverishly while watching the fireflies dancing wildly. She occasionally becomes talkative huh.

Thud, with such sound, Liza's spear fell on the sofa nearby. Liza who comes to her sense from that sound picks up the spear. Everyone's line of sight gathered for an instant but it scatters away again. Liza apologizes for her impoliteness and returns to standing by posture, but she looks obviously embarrassed It's rare to see embarrassed Liza. It might be the first time even.

"Master, my vocabularies are insufficient. I request installation of the second language set."

What the heck is the second language set.

"You don't need to mind about vocabulary. It's enough with the word, beautiful."
"Yes, master. It's beautiful."

Nana leaks out a sigh of wonder and hugs my head from behind while watching the boisterous dance of the light. I'll say the important thing once again. Nana is hugging my head from behind with her breasts. Of course, she's not doing such boorish thing like wearing armor since we're on the ship. In other words, it's direct.

What a happy day.
I'd like for time to stop while it's like this.

Part 19 - A Night No One Knows

Satou's here. As I lived in Japan where the limit for religions was lax, country that went to war for difference in religious views was strange to me. I wonder if there's also religious war even in a parallel world?

◇

The ship carrying us is anchored at a place where the capital's night view can be seen. The port is crowded due to the tournament season, so we're waiting our turn. It seems the duke has issued order to prioritize ships that are carrying supplies, there are a lot of other anchored ships.

Since the captain has gotten the right to enter the port first thing in the morning tomorrow, it looks like we could enter the port without waiting tomorrow.
Everyone was watching the night view until just now, but since the youth trope began to doze off, I made them turn back to the room.
I hear light footsteps, I look back, and there's Arisa.

"You're going after all?"
"Ah."

I answer briefly to Arisa who's giving off strange atmosphere.

"I can't imagine you'd fall off against opponents at the level of short horn, but absolutely don't let your guard down, okay?"
"Ah, I know. Or rather, I'm going for it before the short horn demons could appear."

We wouldn't be able to tour the capital relaxedly if there are people who are like terrorists with bombs around. Moreover, I've been looking forward to the scroll workshop, like I would let them get in the way.

Furthermore, the identities of the people who are holding the short horns are suspicious. Majority of them are younger people of the nobles who are members of a secret society called [Wings of Liberty]. There doesn't seem to be anyone who has peerage, but there's even a direct descendant of the duke among them. I feel like the weaselkins are involved with them in the background, but the members are all humans.

"Alright now, you have to absolutely come back unharmed okay? You're not a hero, so don't be reckless! If you come back with even a scratch, I will never let you go alone again!"
"I know, I won't overdo it. If some strange powerful enemies comes out, I'll proceed with [Protect life]."

Since Arisa still tends to be overprotective, I put her at ease by citing play tactics from a famous game that's common in both our worlds. Arisa finally nods her head while saying, "Really, that's fine then.", so I decide to depart.

"Arisa, the likes of river pirates might attack tonight, so have someone among our companions to do night watch, it's also fine to call lady Karina and her maids to our room. If she comes, Raka would be with her."

I shouldn't say that Arisa is overprotective. I'm one as well.

◇

Now then, there was a little something that I didn't tell Arisa.

First, there are about 300 Wings of Liberty's members who aren't holding the short horns. There isn't anyone past level 30. I feel that they should have been exposed with Yamato stone, but since every member has not-less-than two affiliations, the other affiliation is probably prioritized.

Their stronghold seems to be a mysterious area several hundreds meter below the capital's ground. I knew this after someone who I had marked before appeared out of map's range, when I checked, it was treated as different area. I wonder if it's a geofront or a labyrinth?

Of course, there are also buildings that look like their offices on various places above the ground.

Furthermore, there are three people with, [Abnormal Status: Demonic Possession]. Among the two executive members, one of them is a clergyman of Tenion temple. Putting aside the former, I wonder why is the latter possessed? Since the three of them are in the underground, I'll do something about them after collecting the short horns.

I wonder if it's because of Spy skill, I've successfully sneaked into the capital without being found out by the patrolling batkin.
Of course I didn't enter via the front gate, I leaped over the outer wall with sky drive skill.

Since it's a sneaking mission at night now, I'm wearing a jet black mask instead of the silver mask. I'm also not wearing robe, but the knight clothes with the ornaments taken out. I've thought that it's better to not wear something conspicuous since my purpose isn't demon subjugation, but thievery.

Now then, even though the night is long, they're gathering in the underground, so I should quickly raid the short horn holders above the ground.

First of all is from a fortuneteller in the back alley. I enter the store without knocking. It took some time with the lock, but I entered without problem. I was somehow able to do it with treasure chest unlock skill.

"Who? The shop is closed for today."

A sexy blond haired older woman tells so as if spitting out, but I make her faint without minding it. I've confirmed that there's no one beside her here, so I collect the short horn from the safe and leave. Just to be sure, I lock the door.

And then, I was able to collect until the fourth person without problem, but the fifth one is bad. Of all things, he's the third son of the duke. I am able to infiltrate the castle somehow, but there are a lot of guards with see-through, surveillance, and enemy search skills scattered around. Even now, I'm hiding from the sentries who are patrolling the area.

There's no beastkin sentries, but I use [Deodorant] magic to erase my smell just in case.

I want to believe in Spy skill level 10, but the density of the sentries is too high, I can't feel relieved. I wonder if I could get invisibility-related skills if I erase my presence like when I get enemy search skill back then?

The fortunate things? There is no shortage of [enemies] who are trying to find me, so it should fulfill the conditions.

Back then I was searching for foreign body in the nature, but it's the opposite now. I relax, and imagine myself melting with the surrounding in mind and body.

Unexpectedly, maybe because I've had similar experience before, I obtain the skills easier that I've thought.

>[Hiding Skill Acquired]
>[Invisibility Skill Acquired]
>[Stealth Steps Skill Acquired]

I activate those skills, and I become able to pass the corridor while concealing my footsteps. There's no doubt that it's also thanks to the soft leather shoes I'm using.

Thanks to combination of the four skills and magic, the infiltration mission is successful, and I've arrived at the living room of the duke's third son. When I peep inside, there's an over thirty years old obese man muttering in low voice while facing a hand mirror. I've thought that he's talking to himself at first, but since the hand mirror is emitting magic power, it's probably a communication-type magic tool. When I listen closely--

"Then, kidnap--no, invite Sera from Teenion temple."

Disturbing words came out. If I'm not mistaken, one of the person with [Abnormal Status: Demonic Possession] is called Sera.

"Umu, I want to go there too, but I'm busy with government affair, so it's extremely unlikely that I could participate in the ritual. No, I am not making light of the society. I understand, I will be there before the ritual begin. Keep the person who can operate the gate waiting."

After he's finished with the hand mirror, he goes before the bookshelves while carrying it. After he operates something, the bookshelves slides out and a hidden room appears. Why do the residents of this fantasy world really like this kind of gimmick I wonder?

Since he's begun changing to the society's attire inside the hidden room, I quickly stun him and collect the short horn. There are passwords list and some kind of plan inside the

treasure chest with the society's attire, so I collect them.
The duke's third son is fainted while wearing the society's attire, I decide to leave him as he is. Theoretically, I'd want to take his attire and wear it for the infiltration, but I don't want to wear that clothes.

There's a hidden passage along the drainage that continues to the castle's basement so I make use of it.

It smells of mold.

The rats are darting about since awhile ago. I would be caught if they were familiars, but since the radar and my crisis perception weren't kicking in, they were probably just normal rats.

There were several alarm devices that looked like spider webs along the way, but they were no obstacles before the trap discovery and crisis perception. Rather, the foul smelling drainage beside the passage I'm advancing in is more painful. Since I'd leave traces behind if I use [Deodorant] magic too much, I have to endure this.

In the middle of the drainage passage, I seized the society attires and changed to it. Typical of a secret society, the attire hides the figure and the face. Since the one who I seize this clothes from is a woman, I hesitate to leave her alone on her underwear, but I put clothes and a mantle that I've taken from the thieves back then on her and tie her up. I'll release her when I return.

◇

"Toward the blue sky."
"The wind of liberty blows."

I replied with the code to a woman who was confirming the password.
There are also other people from the society gathered here. There is no one who has short horn among these people here.

There are people wearing different clothes than ordinary members' that seem to be the higher-ups, they seem to be disputing about something since awhile ago.

"What should we do, Mitsuo-dono still hasn't come yet."
"That fool must be resting somewhere. There's no time until the ritual start, let's go ahead."

Apparently, they're waiting for the duke's third son that I've stunned earlier, but it seems to be near the time for the ritual. I've been scanning the document that I've snatched from the third son since awhile ago, but I'm doubting if the content is serious. They're offering sacrifices with the ritual to summon holy relic--based on the context, the short horn from hell.

Today's sacrifice is probably lady Sera that the third son's talked about before. Since she's been possessed by the demon, she might have been sacrificed already.

I go to the gate device that would transport us to the underground area with the other members. I've imagined that it'll be like the torii/shrine archway that I've seen before, but it looks more like the Stonehenge instead.

The device is activated, and we move to the underground area. It's a type without time lapse huh.

I activate [All Map Exploration] in secret, and check on the underground area's composition. It's the [Pig King Labyrinth: Ruin] here. It doesn't seem to be an active labyrinth. It's probably the same kind as the [Withered Labyrinth] in Arisa's country. There should be some monsters left even if it's withered, but there is none at all here. There are only common insects and small animals.

The society's people seem to be gathered beyond this corridor. Since my main objectives, the short horn holders and the three demonic possession people are there, it looks like I could settle it at once.

Part 20 - A Night No One Knows (2)

Satou's here. There were a lot of light novel and games that had had religious groups as the villains during the end of the twentieth century, but it felt like I didn't see it much recently.

◇

"Oi, you're late, the ritual has already begun. I'll open the door, so take your positions quietly."

A person who looks to be a leader-type is scolding us with rough voice in front of the door that leads to the ritual room. The scolding is over quickly, I slip in with the society members to go into the door.

I've thought of this since I mix in awhile ago, but they're full of leaks.
They don't look like a group that would do such outrageous thing as summoning items from hell. There's something mismatched about this. I wonder if there's someone who's pulling the string from behind?

Well, whatever.
There are probably only a few places where they can hold the ritual, so if I destroy this place, people who are thinking of doing misconducts will lay low.

The ritual room is wide. The width is 200 meters, the height is 20 meters, the depth is nearly 1 kilometer long. Of course there are a lot of standing pillars, but they sure are strong for supporting such enormous weight. Is it due to [Fixture Magic]?

My thought had wandered off for a bit.
The nearly 200 men and women inside the room are reciting poetry-like words repeatedly. It doesn't seem to be a spell chant.

There are three beds of stones lined up on the altar, and three girls are sleeping there. Magic circle-like drawings are painted on the girls' bare skins. They don't seem to be dressed.

"Summon the holy relics as compensations for these unsullied girls!"
""""Summon!""""

It seems I've come slightly late. Following the most self-important looking man's shout and the replies, three executive members beside the girls raise ceremonial daggers overhead, and swing it downward toward the girls' hearts.

Maybe it's not like the usual me.

The moment I see the executive members raise the daggers, I rush out instantly.

I feel the members behind me are blown to the wall. Looks like they've been exposed to the reaction from my sudden acceleration.

I run at the speed of an arrow, but I won't make it like this.

Remote Stun would be excellent for a case like this, but Sky Drive is faster. The magic gun's range is 200 meters. It's still far.

"M-A-K-E-I-T!"

I try to convince myself by yelling.
The moment during the executives' dagger swinging downward is only for an instant, in reality it can even be called [Now], but this isn't futile it seems.

At the next moment, I feel like strangely running in water, and when I come to, I've kicked the daggers from the executives' hands.

>[Ground Shrink Skill Acquired]

◇

"Who are you!"

The man who said that must be the society's head, no doubt.
But I make everyone faints before they can say anything. Since I make use of the ground shrink skill that I've just acquired, I must be looking like split bodies from their point of views.

Thanks to that, I don't need much time to make the nearly 200 members powerless.

I'd like to collect the short horns, but I guess I'll do something about the demonic possession people first.

"Disturbing the ritual like this, what a boorish comrade, deojaru."
"Yes, yes, truly like the inferior beings humans are, nari."

Two demons appears by breaking out of the bodies of two members that have fallen on the ground as if taking off clothes.

They're not short horns.

They're the same upper-ranked demon like Wagahai-kun.
The 'ojaru' one has red body with deer-like horns, it doesn't have wings. The 'nari' one has bronze body with water buffalo-like horns, it has two pairs of wings. They're both level 63.

"Good grief, he's foolish beyond help for disturbing our resurrection ritual, nanoda."

There's a figure of a girl sitting on the stone bed. The girl--no, the one possessing the girl doesn't show its true body.

Leaving aside the life of the members, I want to save the sacrifice girls.
I use ground shrink skill, and carry the two girls to the exit.

"I won't let you go, deojaru."

As if space is breaking in front of my eyes, the red-body demon teleports in.
Since both of my hands are occupied, I restraint it with [Remote Arrow] and [Short Stun], shooting with maximum power.

"I'll return it, deojaru."

The magic that I've shot toward the demon return to me in entirety.

Space magic huh!

The Remote Arrows change their course back to the demon, but the Short Stuns are going to directly hit me. I put up Shield at once to stop it. The shield breaks in an instant, but I've successfully arrived at the door.

I leave the girls on the other side of the door, and close it.

The red-body demon behind me is fed up with the Remote Arrows that are coiling around it.

"Irritating, deojaru."

The red-body demon roars, making cracks run on the space and destroys the Remote Arrows. Thanks to magic perception, I could see stream of magic that worked like early warning before the cracks ran on the space.

I turn ON the silver mask set and hero title before it's too late.
My equipped sword is Durandal, not Excalibur, it's not because I'm unwilling. I've stored dangerous amount of magic power inside Excalibur when I experiment with storing magic power, so I'm afraid that I would collapse the capital if I'm careless with it.
Durandal's performance is worse than Excalibur, but it's exceptionally strong compared to Gjallarhorn, so there's probably no problem.

"Houhou? I've thought it's a rat, turn out you're a hero, nari."

The bronze demon is approaching while munching on something. The altar's side has become a blood bath.
They themselves become the demon's sacrifices this time huh.

Right now, it's not the time to sympathize with them.
I put off dealing with the red-body for later, and going to get rid of the bronze demon first.

I move like teleporting with Ground Shrink, and slip below the bronze demon's chest, cutting--

Tremendous pressure overwhelms me.

>[Gravity Magic Skill: Demon Acquired]
>[Gravity Resistance Skill Acquired]

Still, I endure the high gravity forcibly, and swing the sword, but just before the holy sword touch the demon, I stop it, and back step away while opening the distance.

"The current hero is weak, instead his intuition is sharp, nari."
"If he cut just as he was, the hero's body would had been split in two, almost, deojaru."

It seems they've set some kind of trap-like magic.
If the crisis perception didn't ring me a warning, it would have been dangerous.

I make the Remote Arrows to fly around randomly, and hit the bronze demon with Short Stun, it seems that the trap magic breaks it huh.

I feel my body is being pulled slightly by the red-body demon. When I look at the log, it seems that it's using magic called [Drawing(Evil Snap)].

>[Space Magic Skill: Demon Acquired]
>[Space Resistance Skill Acquired]

I activate the resistance skill.

"The magic isn't too effective even though his level is low, deojaru."
"Ushashashasha, senility excuse nari huh?"

Their attentions turn toward each others, now.

Making full use of Ground Shrink and Sky Drive, I rain down Short Stuns in 16 three-dimensional directions.
As expected, the Short Stuns begin to change their course, turning back. There's the bronze demon among one of the course.

When it hit the bronze demon, the short stun is forwarded to the red demon like the trap magic. It's different than the plan, but the result is alright.

Of course, they've only received small damages.

However, that's fine.

That instant chance I've got is quite enough.

When the blue glow from Durandal have melted in the darkness, the red-body demon becomes pieces of meat and falls to the ground.
I sprinkle it with dragon scales that I've taken out of the storage, incinerating it so it can't revive.

[Flash Slash Skill Acquired]

◇

"This is strange, nari."

Taking the moment when the bronze demon is stunned, I take out the Holy Bolt set loaded with magic power from the storage, and shoot it.

The bronze demon tries to repel it with its hand that has jet black spiral appeared on it.

"Avoid it, noda!"

With the possessed girl's words, the bronze demon inclines his body to avoid the bolt in a hurry, but it couldn't avoid the arrow, and its upper body is ripped into many pieces. Annihilated.

I've originally expected the bolt to be a mere diversion, but it's unexpectedly effective.
I cut the bronze demon while also using it to test Flash Slash skill.

"This is, splendid nanoda. I have to apologize for thinking you're a small fry hero, nanoda. No, I ought to thank you for destroying my courtiers, nanoda."

The girl who's sitting with one knee drawn up on the edge of the stone bed murmurs so as if asking questions.
When the girl stands up, she begins to spin words in a clear voice as if she's a stage actress.

"The time of my revival has come. O humanity fear it! Today, at this time, the world will begin its walk into ruins noda!"

This should be the scene where I should shudder, but maybe thanks to the strange word she's adding at the end of her sentence, it feels like a comedy show instead.

Now then, looks like round two begins.

Part 21 - A Night No One Knows (3)

Satou's here. Ever since I come to this world, I get unnaturally high chances of meeting beautiful women, but it's not limited to only beautiful women.

◇

"What's wrong, are you so scared you can't talk, noda?"

However, I can only hear the scream of a chuunibyou patient from the girl who's declaring with daunting pose.
Moreover, she's swinging her arms matching her speaking rhythm, so her exposed breasts are shaking and swaying. I can't help but become interested in it since awhile ago. Yup, they're big relative to her age.

"O black-haired hero. I do not care why you're hiding your appearance, but can you entertain me like Yamato? I won't forgive if you bore me, noda."

I wonder if she has see-through skill, the girl's eyes are shining red.

I'm sorry for the possessing demon who's trying to set up the mood, but at this time, I'm not thinking, "How do I defeat the enemy", but, "How do I get this fellow out of the girl's body", instead.

I wonder if I could do something with Saint title and magic healing somehow?
It might be good to learn ways to exorcise demons. It'd be terrible if someone I know got possessed.

Let's use persuasion skill here--I've also thought of such thing. Before I could open my mouth, the girl's time is up.

"Thanks for making my courtiers become sacrifices, the power has been filled, noda."

Something is making cracking sounds.

The girl's back is splitting.

A wild boar-head comes out of it.

Right when the hairless wild boar demon starts to make its appearance, the girl's health becomes zero in an instant.

This isn't the time to be dumbfounded. Take action rather than regretting.
I rain down Short Stuns on the wild boar-head to restraint it, and strike it with palm technique combined with ground shrink while pulling the girl's body away.

I put the girl's body that has just died into the Storage. Of course in one set with the flowed blood. I cannot do it, but a priest or a miko might be able to revive a body that has just died.

It should be that flexible in a fantasy.
I make Sera folder in the Storage as to keep it from mixing with other things.

"Fumu? What exactly you intend to do nanoda? Rather than worrying about collecting corpses, you should begin pursuing me instead nanoda."

I pay no attention to the incomprehensible critique.
Well, thanks to the useless talk, my magic power has recovered, so let's consider it as a good thing.

"Since I've just been resurrected, I am weaker than during my heyday, noda. This is your once in a lifetime chance to win nanodazo? Now, come at me with all your power, noda."

Violet light that looks like ripple creeps on the wild boar-head, and its body shines golden. Looks like they're support magic like what Wagahai-kun did. According to AR reading, they're [Physical Damage 99% Cut], and [Magic Damage 90% Cut].

If this is the demon's weakened form, just how strong it has been, let's quickly settle this.
I press the demon with the same combo I've used to beat the bronze demon. Restrain it with magic, and finish with the holy bolt.

However, the two attacks were prevented without effort.

Short Stun and Remote Arrow are repelled just before it touch the golden wild boar-head's skin and disappear. Even though they've worked earlier, it seems that the golden skin has prevented it from working.
Next, the golden wild boar-head spit out something from its mouth, and that invisible something destroys the holy bolt, leaving only blue afterglow.

"This is, I can't make light of."

The golden wild boar-head murmurs in low voice, and lets out second support magic chant roar. Did it make some kind of chant from its mouth somewhere?

Oops, this isn't the time to flinch and think about it.

I went with the closing in and attack physically tactic.

One meter before my holy sword touch the golden wild boar-head, multiple small shields magic like the one Raka's used unfolds, and they're crushed by the holy sword.

They're just small shields that are easily broken, but--

Little by little.

Yes, it seems to be reducing the holy sword's power by just a little.

After breaking nearly 100 small shields, the holy sword stops after advancing for about 50 centimeters. I'd really like to learn this magic.

"Fumu, it has more attack power than Claiomh Solais that Yamato uses huh. It should have been able to quickly kill my retainers."

I'm still trying to push through it even now, but the golden wild boar-head demon takes out two liuyedao from its mouth, and attacks from both sides using the two sabers.

I stop one side with a holy shield, and the other with the holy sword. I'm pushed by tremendous power. Since the normal stone pavements are gouged out after I get pushed for several meters, I use sky drive as my foothold and hold out with all my might. It consumes magic power, but it can't be helped in this situation.

Even if I attack, it's always prevented by the multiple small shields. I have to do something about it or else my attack won't ever reach.
I could destroy the demon's weapons the moment our weapons touch, but conversely, the jet black mist-like feelers coming out of the liuyedao are also trying to break my sword, so I can't let my guard down.

◇

I haven't got damage, but it's the same for the opponent too. We can't hit each other, and only time passes.

"I will be more serious, noda."

The golden wild boar-head demon cover its whole body with violet light once again.

It's probably the unique skill of this guy.
The demon doesn't hide its unique skill at all. There are three which are [Ikkitousen], [Phantasmagoric], [Banpufutou]. Looking at the first case, it's probably fine to think that all three have been used.

The two liuyedao are also wrapped in golden lights. It seems that the attack powers have been upped. Their powers were originally close to the holy sword, but now they're definitely stronger than Durandal.

I ward off the powered-up liuyedao with the holy shield. Seeing that my crisis perception is at work, the holy shield might be destroyed if I stop it carelessly.

The holy sword attack is once again prevented by the multiple small shields.

Wait.

Prevented by the multiple small shields?

In other words, even for the demon with 99% physical damage cut, holy swords are dangerous existences huh.

And I also remember another more important thing.

The holy bolt wasn't prevented by the multiple small shields, but intercepted by destruction magic.

In other words--.

So it's like that huh.

I'm setting up strategy while avoiding the demon's attacks.

I'll break through the multiple small shields, give damage to the demon, and drive in the holy bolt when it's at the state where it could not intercept with destruction magic.

◇

First, in order to break the multiple small shields, I have to increase my moves.

I put the holy shield back into the Storage, and pull out the magic sword Balmung on one hand. It's not a holy sword, but its attack power doesn't fall behind Durandal. It doesn't really matter, but both have matching golden grips.

However, it seems the opponent is also exploring the breakthrough solution.

Many jet-black rings arise near the golden wild boar-head demon.
They rush on me as if they're independent creatures. I try to counter them with Short Stun and Remote Arrow, but either magic disappear as soon as it comes in contact with them.

Anti magic-attack huh?

I take out a suitable stone out of the Storage and hurl it. The ring disappears while sounding like water droplet dropped on a heated frying pan.

Looks like physical attack works just fine.

I coat the holy sword with magic edge and intercept the jet-black rings that are assaulting.

>[Holy Edge Skill Acquired]

I don't know the difference with magic edge, but since the name indicates that the skill would work well against demons, I allocate it maximum point and activate it.

I absorb magic power from the holy sword, and coat it with holy edge, but they look completely identical. The magic usage is the same too, I wonder what differ.

"O defective hero, what are you nanoda? Even though you can only use beginner level magic, your avoiding capability is top-tier, your swordsmanship is superb yet you only have one straight technique. It does not look like you're holding back. You're like an artificially created cultivation, nanoda."

The analysis is too accurate, my ears hurt.

"I've been trying to turn you into stone with magic eye since awhile ago, but it's not working at all, noda."

In the log, starting with petrification, a lot of special attacks like paralyze, and curse are displayed in array, but everything has been resisted.

Right at that time, the golden wild boar-head demon roars--magic huh.

I put up Shield as a countermeasure, but it's destroyed by the invisible bullet the golden wild-boar demon shoots. It's impossible for beginner magic after all huh.

When the shield is getting destroyed by the bullet, I frantically avoid the liuyedao's stabs. Even though the bullets are invisible, I can understand the techniques' trajectories due to Space Grasp and Magic Perception combined, so it's easier than the liuyedao. Since my clothes evaporates when it's near the bullets' orbit, it has become meaningless. My skin feels a bit itchy.

>[Destruction Magic: Demon Skill Acquired]
>[Destruction Resistance Skill Acquired]

I promptly activate the resistance skill. Seeing how close this fight is, I'd welcome it even if it only helps a bit.

I invoke holy edge on the holy sword, and prevent the invisible bullets, but since I'm also defending against the liuyedao, it's really busy.
I get closer and try to kick the demon, but it's prevented by multiple small shields just like with the holy sword. Since my shoes have been evaporated too, my toes hurt.

I have nothing to lose anyway, so I invoke Furnace Flame (Forge). It should be usable as a distraction at least. I'm using it while thinking lightly, but the multiple small shields are burned like scrap of papers.

"Inferno huh! That's your trump card is it."

The golden wild boar-head demon roars once again, but I can hear its speech overlapping it.

ROAR.

In an instant, thunderous roars are echoing to the point that I can't hear anything.
Looks like I've been directly hit by the demon's magic attack that has vast range. The magic sword Balmung on my right hand is leaking out red light, but since it's blinking as if breaking, I put it back into the Storage. I take out magic sword Nothung in its place.

>[Explosion Magic: Demon Skill Acquired]
>[Explosion Resistance Skill Acquired]

I'm bothered with the difference between destruction and explosion, but I want the resistance for now. Honestly, it's too painful. Pain resistance, please work harder. It's like

this even though my HP hasn't decreased much, I'm afraid if I get hit directly by the liuyedao.

My injuries are healed in a blink of an eye with self-healing, but my clothes has vanished.
Since I don't enjoy being in the nude, I wear the black mask equipment with quickdress. It can't be helped if this is called transformation having such speed.

"Fumu, looks like the counterbalancing is over, nanoda."

Counterbalancing?
The demon's figure doesn't look like it at all. Burned by the Furnace Flame (Forge), half of its body has inflamed.
Is it weak to fire. Or maybe, it's because Furnace Flame(Forge) is an intermediate level magic.

I generate holy edge on both swords on my hands and cut with them.
I invoke Furnace Flame(Forge) to burn down the small shields.

Although, it looks like the opponent has expected it too. It's invoking the explosion magic like just now, jet-black rings, and invisible bullets at the same time. Using three different magic at the same time huh, tremendous.

I shoot Short Stun on the ground while matching the explosion magic obstructing the view, using that gap, I use Sky Drive and Ground Shrink like somersaulting, and teleport behind the demon high in the sky.

While invoking Furnace Flame (Forge), I cut both the demon's arms with the holy and magic swords.

The swords reach before the shields are all burned down, but maybe because the number is low, it reach the demon's body. However, ripples spread out on the golden body, and the attacks are prevented.
When it's prevented, it feels like some kind of protection membrane has been broken. Typically in a game, it's like magic that could prevent attacks once. Since it shouldn't be able to prevent attacks indefinitely, I guess I'll rush it multiple times.

The demon swings the liuyedao without looking back, I stop it with both swords.

It was the demon's trap. At the same time my crisis perception kicks in, 8 rib bones break out of the demon's back and try to skewer me like living things.

I took evasive action at once, but they accelerated at the speed more tremendous than I had predicted.

Guh, I couldn't avoid it, and the rib spears pierced through my body.

It hurts, it hurts, it hurts.
I endure the burning-like pain, and break the stuck rib spears with my knee. Fortunately, the pain is only for an instant, it quickly disappears like pulling tides. It's aching, but I bear it.

The treatment is after this.

The demon is fixing its posture, but I won't let it. I drive the Furnace Flame to the wild boar-head with all my power. I can see the magic it's going to invoke, so I stab it with holy sword, destroying the magic.

When the demon is being burned by the Furnace Flame (Forge), it throws away the liuyedao, catches me with both its hands, and presses me hard. Such stupid strength. P, painful.

I fire an additional Furnace Flame (Forge) with all my might.
The invoked crimson flame roasts the demon's body. Of course, the one who fires it, me, am also not safe from it. The black costume becomes ash.

Maybe thanks to fire resistance, my body only becomes red, but I don't have any burn.

No, it is crazy hot here you know?

It seems I'm the winner of this patience contest.

The power on the demon's arms are loosened.
This momentary chance is enough, I enlarge the gap by force and slip away.

I store away the magic sword, and exchange it for magic power-loaded holy bolt, and immediately shoot it.

The holy bolt is sucked into the demon's abdomen--

The demon's abdomen along with its defense are destroyed.

Not yet.

The demon's health hasn't become zero.

I pour my remaining magic power into the holy sword Durandal in one go, and activate holy edge skill.
I split the demon's body into two, and even while spouting flames and smokes from its body, the golden wild boar-head demon raises its fist on the air, and swing its last blow.

The blue track of the flash slash sucks the demon's heart, blue light that gushes out of its body blow its upper body out.

While back-stepping away to open some distances, I take out a health and a magic recovery potions from the storage and gulp the two bottle down.

Yes, it's still too early to be relieved. If it dies with just this much, it couldn't be called a Demon Lord.

Yes, the demon's name is [Golden Wild Boar King], a level 120 Demon Lord.

Good grief, there are too many obstacles in my pleasant sightseeing tour.

Now then, shall we begin the third round next.

Part 22 - A Night No One Knows (4)

Satou's here. I wonder since when is the trend of boss characters transform for so many times when you're defeating them? It's generally troublesome when it's in a game, but when it's in real life....

◇

It's probably the effect of the demon's unique skill. The demon has revived as an undead. The demon's upper body that should have been lost has also regenerated in the blink of an eye. There's no worth in defeating this guy.
The two liuyedao have been lost somewhere when I destroy the upper body earlier, thankfully.

I do have several trump cards, but since I don't know how many times the demon can revive, I won't recklessly use them. It's painful that one MP recovery potion only recovers 20% of my MP with one bottle.
From now on, I'll charge magic swords and the holy swords whenever I'm free.

"It has been since Yamato that I have to resort using Banpufutou's effect. O Nanashi, perchance you can beat me? Yamato took the heavenly dragons lot along to attack my castle. You alone intend to be the equivalent of a hero and heavenly dragons nanoda huh."

Fumu, since my name is blank, it's [Nanashi] huh. I guess I'll call myself Nanashi from now on.

Thanks to HP potion and self-healing skill, my wounds have disappeared. It still hurts, but not to the degree that makes me unable to fight. Looks like it's bad for the opponent to let me heal more than this.

"The heavenly dragons are taking rests."

While holding three MP recovery potions on my mouth, I operate the storage with thought. Since the demon launches destruction magic towards me, I slap the magic with my palm and change its course. The demon is muttering, "Ridiculous", but I ignore it. My palm is stinging. I don't want to touch that magic too much.

"Besides, the professional hero is currently taking a vacation with beautiful big-breasted women in the imperial capital."

I'd hit him if he really was on a vacation.

I exchanged Durandal for [Trump Card #1, Holy Spear Longinus] from the storage, and pour it in with magic power that I've just recovered. I feel dizzy from using too much magic power, but I endure it.

"Professional hero? Then what are you, nanoda?"

"I'm a part-timer. My main job is a tourist."

Tourist is not a job. I know.
Using vague words to distract the demon is just fine. The demon uses destruction magic, but the aim is loose. Use ranged magic if you want to hit me.

I shouldn't think unnecessary things.
The demon really launches ranged magic. I kick up the stone pavement below my feet, standing it up and make it into a shield. Unfortunately, I don't get tatami flip skill.

The demon's magic destroys the stone pavement and rushes to me.

I've put up Shield to buy some time, but it's meaningless. The shield also breaks in an instant. I twist my body and protect the important places.

Ouch.

As expected of the demon lord's attack. It's wholesomely painful. Even though the pain quickly goes away, painful thing is painful.
Looking at the health gauge that's only reduced for a bit, the demon is probably the type that's weak with magic.

This time a breath attack is coming, so I use Ground Shrink to evade it. Of course, before it.

While closing in like teleporting, I launch a technique.

Three-stranded spiral spear attack.

I invoke Furnace Flame (Forge) at the same time to burn down the multiple small shields.
The first and second spiral attacks pierce both shoulders of the golden wild boar demon lord's, the third spiral attack pierces the heart. While like that, the holy light sucks the demon's body--

Half of the demon's body has been blasted.

However, the demon cut half of its body with both of its edge-like claws before the spiral spear attack effect reach it. A new body grows out of the remaining half. Are you a planarian.

This demon is much more immortal than Zen.

This time translucent tentacles-like things come out of the demon's hand and attack. What a diverse guy.
Since it's destroyed with just one stab of Longinus, I don't know what kind of attack it is, but it's probably dangerous to recklessly take it.

The demon's eyes are glittering, but since I don't know what kind of attack is it, I look at the log and a chill runs down my spine. They're instant death attack, followed by attack with

instant death effect.

>[Instant Death Resistance Skill Acquired]

I stop my assault, and activate the skill on the spot. Next time, if I see the demon doing the same motion, I should take out a mirror.

◇

Since then, my attacks have hit it for many times, but the demon gets revived each time due to its unique skill's effect. It has been revived for seven times already, I want it to end.

The demon seems to think that magic and special attacks are not working against me, this time it changes to attacking physically.

The most annoying one is when I'm attacking it in close range.

While yelling with spirit, I stab at the demon's heart with Longinus, at that time, its hands stretch out toward me. I judge that I could avoid the stretched arms attack with a paper-thin difference, but--

The arm bone breaks through the hand and flies out like a crossbow's bolt.
Its attacks have become increasingly absurd.

While being slightly surprised, I acrobatically avoid the bone arrow.
Short Stun is already unable to even act as a feint, so I don't use it.

Making use of the air as a foothold with Sky Drive, I stab with the holy spear while being upside-down.
It's no good even though the heart is pierced after all huh.

When it comes to this, I have no choice but to cut up the body to pieces and then, evaporate or burn it down.
I exchange Longinus with Durandal.

There's only little magic power left in it, so the blue light that comes out of Durandal is faint.

"What's wrong hero. You can't manage to defeat this immortal body, nodana?"

The demon takes out two rib bones from the sides under its arm, holds it, and lets out a short roar that makes the rib bones get covered in black flames. Flame magic swords huh?

"I'll let you taste my black flame bone swords, noda. Come, dance the dance of death."

The demon lord comes attacking with two swords style, but leaving aside its appearance, the black flame bone swords are more fragile than the liuyedao. When our swords clash, I just get slightly burned from the black flame.

"What the hell are you, nanoda? Basking in the black flame, bringer of ruin that burns down

heavenly dragons, why are you unhurt?!"

I guess it's because my level is high? No, it might be because my destruction resistance skill is at MAX.
Moreover, I do get hurt. It's just that my recovery speed is fast. MP is used for recovery, so I should take care as not to get hurt as much as possible. It hurts after all.

"If you're unhurt, then I'll just keep attacking until you do, noda!"

Please stop doing endless repetitive moves.
The demon endlessly takes out another black flame bone swords whenever I destroy it, and right when I get bored with it, I've finally recovered enough magic power.

As I energetically destroy the black flame bone swords, I cut the demon's body into pieces. When it starts reviving, I invoke Furnace Flame (Forge) during the regeneration's time of half of an eye's blink, incinerating it.

And yet, the demon still regenerates without losing to the fire.

As expected of a demon lord.

Oops, this isn't the time to admire it.

While maintaining Furnace Flame (Forge), I charge holy bolts that I've taken from the Storage, set up crossbow sets, and shoot it. I shoot the remaining 10 sets during the short time.

At last the pieces of meat that are regenerating stop wriggling.

I have to perform the last rite now.
I take out a new thing from the storage, [Trump Card #2, Holy Sword Galatine], and slash with it, evaporating the demon.

I've not thought that I'd end up taking out the secret, Galatine. Galatine is a sibling sword of Excalibur, I've filled with reasonable amount of magic power. If it's still not good with this one, I'd have to use Excalibur even though it's dangerous.

In preparation for the second revival, I gulp down potions. I drink too much, feel sick.

◇

Apparently, it won't revive again. The evidence is the appearance of these guys.

"Kusukusu, it lost huh."
"It lost, lost to Yamato."
"It lost to the new hero too."

Three small violet lights rise up, just like the time with Zen.
No, their colors are a bit black. Jet black lights are also mixed in occasionally. The impression

I sense from them are the same, but are they different things?

"It's an Orc after all."
"What should we use this time?"
"Weasel seems smart."

Thinking that I would not harm them, they let their guard down, I cut the black violet lights.

I slash the jet black lights three times, and the three after-lights disappear. I take off [God Slayer] from my title, and put the divine sword into the Storage. It feels like the divine sword has absorbed the slashed lights, but since the divine sword's status hasn't changed, it's probably just my imagination.

After crushing the black violet lights, the log flows in great speed indicating loots acquisitions, but I scroll back on it and will check the loot for later. The log properly shows [Fragments of God have been defeated!], so I've probably beaten them.

When I carefully think about it, the deeds make it as if I'm picking a fight with the god, but it's a done deal so there's no use in thinking about it. Though, I feel that an existence that lends its power to the demon lord would be hostile even if I don't do anything anyway. Even if I've antagonized the god, I hope that it's the kind of god with 100 years later scale.

>Title [Demon Lord Slayer]
>Title [Demon Lord Slayer『Golden Wild Boar King』] Acquired
>Title [True Hero] Acquired
>Title [Unsung Hero] Acquired.

Part 23 - A Night No One Knows (5)

Satou's here. It seems that the generation that has been around during the dawn of home consoles makes a list of hiragana for Spell of Restoration. I laughed thinking that it was a joke when I heard it, but it's the truth. Humans could unexpectedly work hard if it's for the sake of entertainment.

◇

Fuh, that was tiring.

Both of the masks have been broken, so I put on a white mask that Arisa's made for cosplay at her request. I feel like I know where the inspiration for it comes form, but it seems like it'd fall off easily, scary. I put on cheap clothes and a mantle, and head toward the hall's exit.

The hall looks disastrous to the point that I admire it for not collapsing.
The floors are turned upside down, several pillars are destroyed, many places have become craters. Some of the craters have glasses formed from Furnace Flame (Forge). There isn't any trace of the altar.

I should say as expected of a demon lord. I've just barely won even though my level is three times as high and fully loaded with items.

It's unfortunate that I won't get a rematch--I don't have even the slightest bit of such thought.
Fortunately, the opponent was a type weak with magic, but if it was strong in both points, I might have lost.

I'll go watch the tournament at the capital and study sword techniques and battle forms.

And also, I'd better resume spell chanting practice.
If an opponent of demon lord class begins with space magic, I don't think I could win. Among the scrolls that I would get from viscount Shimen (Toruma's parent house), magic destruct and magic cancel are indispensable. And also, intermediate level or higher attack magic. I might have got checkmated if I didn't have Furnace Flame (Forge). If I find a nice liquor during the journey, I will be sure to present it to the one who has sold me that scroll, Galhar-shi.

While thinking those thing, I open the heavy door and get out of the hall. I immediately understand why the door has been slightly opened.

There should have been a member here. I search in the Storage. There's an item called [Petrified Member]. Come to think of it, the demon lord was attacking with petrification magic eyes right. He saw that huh, curiosity killed the cat indeed.

I put long shirts on the two sacrifice girls. The two have proportions that don't look like their 14 years old ages, so I can have some peaces of mind with this.

The girls seem to be Garleon and Parion temples' miko. They're both level 30, quite wonderful.

I carry them both on my shoulders to the teleportation room, but I don't know how to operate it. The operation manual is among the loot I've got, but honestly, I'm too tired, I can't bring myself doing all these.

I scrape off the ceiling with a magic spear, and expose the soil.

Next, I use Mud Wall to create a narrow passage. Magic is really convenient.
I run up the impromptu passage--or rather, hole, with Sky Drive. There are three members in the initial teleportation room, but since it's troublesome, I hit them with Short Stun. They should not be dead.

Since the road I use to come here leads to the duke's third son's room, I pick the course that goes to the temple via the map and advance toward there from the underground. I see a white crocodile and a mysterious creature-like person wearing a rag along the way, but I ignore them all. It might be good to come play here while bringing presents when I've become better.

I'm going to Tenion temple, the place where the dead girl comes from. It's not because the girl belongs there, but because only Tenion temple has a head miko of old age with level higher than 50. Moreover, she has the [Saintess] title.

While mechanically advancing through the course that I've picked earlier, I operate on the girl's corpse in the storage. I try to drag and drop the blood that has flowed out of the girl and stack them. Rather than stack, it seems the blood has been absorbed by the corpse, they can't be separated it seems.
I drag a potion with the same idea, but it's no good.

The title [Saintess] that the Tenion head-miko has comes to my mind. Maybe it also has some kind of special effects like the hero title?

I have nothing to lose, so I put on [Saint] title, and drag the potion, it works.

Although it's not like she's been revived. The item's name has changed from [Sera's Corpse: Degree of Damage, Maximum] to [Sera's Corpse: Degree of Damage, Great]. I drag several potions until the item name changes into, [Sera's Corpse], so I don't think this is a waste.

Afterwards, it all depends if there's resurrection magic or not.

◇

"Ara, the assassin tonight is quite excellent. This is the first time I don't notice one until he's this close."

I've sneaked into the Tenion head miko's room, but I immediately get mistaken for an assassin.

"Ara, you're an assassin and also a kidnapper?"

The head miko-san who has noticed the girls on my shoulders asks as if baffled.
Beside holy magic, this old woman also has character appraisal and crisis perception skills. That's why I've made my level to be 70, like the Saga hero is, beforehand, so she would believe the story later. I've left my displayed skills to be of recovery-related ones.

Anyway, let's correct the misunderstanding for now.

"Nice to meet you, Yu Tenion Head Miko-dono. I am Nanashi. I have no intention of harming you. These two girls are Parion and Garleon miko that I've rescued from a cult group called『Wings of Liberty』."
"My. I certainly remember them. Hey, Nanashi-san. Won't you show your face. It's hard to talk with that mask."
"I'm very sorry, head miko-dono. It is my principle to hide good deeds. Please pardon me."
"Is that so, you're such a shy saint-sama."

Her voice is young. Her moonlit face doesn't look like a 80 years old at all. I would believe it if I'm told she's 17.

"Hey, Nanashi-san. Don't you know the whereabout of our kidnapped miko, Sera."
"I knew."

It's not reflected on her expression, but her tone of voice becomes deeper.
She seems to have guessed everything from my words, her face is stiff.

"That child has died huh."

I nod on her words.

"Nanashi-san, could you honestly tell me one thing?"
"If I could answer it."

She asks in slightly trembling voice.

"Was the one who deprived Sera's life the humans of『Wings of Liberty』? or--"

After hesitating for a bit, she continues her words.

"Demon lord. That's right isn't it, Sera has been sacrificed for the demon lord."
"That's right."

A trickle of tears streams down the head miko's noble face.

"Is that so, that child wasn't able to go against her fate."

The head miko-san talks with sobbing mixed in.
It looks like there's an oracle that says the demon lord will appear in not so distant day. However, the place are different in each of oracles that the seven miko has received,

therefore, everyone believes that their own gods has brought oracle for themselves each.

According to head miko-san, the fate of the girl (Sera) was to become a sacrifice for demon lord's resurrection in this city. Even though Tenion temple had put utmost efforts in protecting her, she suddenly disappeared in her own room the evening today.

And, it seems that the oracle of Tenion temple tells that the demon lord would be resurrected in this Oyugock city.
When I ask in detail just in case, the name of labyrinth city, Selbira, and the kingdom that has occupied Arisa's kingdom, Yowok kingdom have also appeared. The remaining four are land of gods Parion, the principalities of the ratkin and weaselkin, and the last one is a country that exists on the other continent.

To get a hit on the 1/7 probability, both me and this city were unlucky.

◇

Let's get back to the main topic.

"Yu Tenion head miko-dono, are you able to use resurrection magic?"
"Yes, I'm able to."

Oh, so it exist, resurrection magic!
As if pouring water on my excitement, the head miko continues with gloomy voice.

"However, there are several conditions for it. First, the subject has to have been baptized by Tenion temple. Second, it must be within 30 minutes after the death. Third, this resurrection artifact has to have stored enough magic power. Since it has been used to resurrect the legitimate child of the duke 20 years ago, it cannot be used for several years more."

What, that sort of things huh.
I pick up the artifact hanging on her neck and put magic power into it. I proceed steadily. It hasn't been filled even after putting in 2000 MP.
It can't be helped, I take out Excalibur from the Storage, and make it into a magic power source. The head miko is surprised when she sees the holy sword, but she puts on appearance by smiling like a Japanese.
The artifact is filled after around 20.000 points in. The capacity of this holy sword is extraordinary after all. I should had used it as magic power tank rather than a weapon when I was fighting the demon lord.
I hear this afterward, but it seems that the only one who could put magic power into the artifact is people who have [Saint] or [Saintess] title.

"I will summon miss Sera's corpse here. It's only been several seconds after her death, so there should be enough time."
"That can't be, time magic should have been a magic that only appears in fairy tales, not the reality...."

There's no time magic huh. I've wanted to go back in time and meet Yamato.

I put back my astray thought.

I take out Sera's corpse from the Storage. Since she's naked, I put a towel on her. Someone is astonished when I take the corpse out of the storage, but I decide not to mind it.

The head miko is chanting a long spell.
Holy magic is usually long, but this time it's especially long.

The chanting is complete, I make sure that Sera has turned from item back to person, and leave the place afer that.

I've forgotten to report about the demon lord thing, but they have the convenient oracle, and it'd be uncool if I go back just to report it, so I leave it. I'm really tired today.

At any rate, it was a long night.
I'd like to be healed at the night place, but for the sake of relieving Arisa and the others who are waiting anxiously, I decide to go back.

Intermission: The Melancholy of Zajir

"You idiot! Put yer' back into it if you want to use the phase hammer!"

The master's fists roar again today.
I've been under master's care for 30 years now, but I still can't use the phase hammer to his satisfaction. Even among master's personal pupils, the only two who could wield the great hammer are only me and Garir. After that, I just have to become able to swing it properly. I'll show that I'd be able to do it in 10, no 5 years. And then, someday I'll build a family (shotai) with Jojori.

"Zajir-san, what's wrong with true character (shoutai)?"
"Jojori huh, nothing, just something trivial."
"Is that so? We have a guest for grandfather, is he in the hall?"
"Yeah, he's in a bad mood, so take care."
"I understand, thank you."

She's lovely today too.
She answers properly even though I act brusque. Truly a nice woman.

◇

The guest that Jojori mentions is a humankin Kozou (youngster). I don't really know humankin age, but he's probably just at coming of age.
However, master tells the youngster to try and make a sword. Moreover, not with iron but mithril? What a waste.

There's a failed mithril from that idiot Rodar's failure earlier, I guess I'll bring that. An amateur probably won't know the difference anyway.

"Use this."
"Yes, thank you very much. This is the first time I'm blacksmithing with a mithril, I feel nervous."

It looks like he has experience of making an iron sword, he's probably not a total amateur, but the ones here are all tempered warriors, even the lowest seat, Rodar, has been making sword for 50 years. It'll be pitiful to compare him with them. Master is cruel for letting this.

The motion of Kozou who smoothly put fire in the furnace slightly catches my attention when I see it. Is this guy really an amateur?

That small doubt becomes conviction when I see Kozou holds the mallet.

That unwavering stance.

He looks like master.

That impression isn't wrong.
Kozou looks puzzled as soon as he strikes with he mallet. Did he notice that slight difference? He could discern failed mithril even though it's the first time he hit one.
The master's fist drops on me for the mithril thing, but such thing doesn't matter. If I give this guy the best mithril, what kind of sword will he make? It's been awhile since my heart boils.

I run to the mithril refinement furnace before master and the others.
I've entrusted it to Rodar. This time, I'll prepare the best mithril myself.

"Yer' bastards! Get fired up!"

I motivate them with rough words but the refinement furnace's guys keep lying on the floor.

"Zajir-san, today, the gnomes aren't here. Because of that there's not enough magic power."
"Spirit! If you just put your spirit, anything can be done."
"Please don't say unresonable things. Then, Zajir-san, please pour your magic power. With spirit!"

That Ganza has also gone to the meeting with the gnomes huh. That's why the mithril today come out bad huh. It's not because of Rodar being careless in his supervision. I'll treat him to a liquor next time.
I try to pour my magic power, but it's not something that an inexperienced person can do. I can only pour around 0.5%. Seems that I'm bad with putting magic power into magic tools.

"It's fine to put magic power into this right."

Looks like Kozou is filling magic power as ordered by master. Judging from the short cane on his waist, he probably can use magic, but the furnace is an equipment that's normally filled by 10 gnomes magic power. It's not something that one person can somehow do, I've experienced it myself just now.

And yet, that guy has accomplished it alone.
The head of the refinement group is surprised to the point that his jaw looks as if dislocated, but I can't say that I don't understand his feeling.

Master is checking the finished mithril with examination apparatus. I know by just seeing it. That's a first-class one. In addition, extremely so. This is the first time I see master especially uses examination apparatus.

◇

Ordered by master, I bring out a great hammer made of mithril alloy from the warehouse. It's far heavier than the usual phase hammer. Unbelievably, master tells Kozou to swing this great hammer.
Telling non-dwarves to swing the great hammer?
Garir and me express our opinions to master, but we only gets dropped fists. I can't go against master's decision.

Kozou who has been asked to swing the great hammer by master also becomes dumbfounded when he's in front of the great hammer.

No wonder. It's not something that a thin humankin kid can lift. When I show him how I hold it with one arm, he's greatly surprised. Kozou admiring me makes me ticklish. We're in front of Jojori. Say more.

"Oops-a-daisy. It's really heavy after all. I can't stabilize my shaking body."

When I look back, Kozou is lifting and practice-swinging the great hammer.

Idiotic. The weight is not something a humankin can stand--that's what should have been.... He's staggering, but he's certainly lifted it. Garir and me can lift it since we have herculean strength skill, but even for the dwarves in this room, only half of them can do it. Who the heck is he really.

"Zajir, go call Ganza."

Master shouts while holding the secret medicine pot on one hand. When I tell master that Ganza is visiting his home and not here, master shouts in angry voice enough to fill the whole room while boiling in anger.
I'm almost given an errand to go to the gnome's hometown, but I get out of the hardship since Kozou can do compounding. What a versatile guy.

Later, Ganza asks me the name of the one who's done the compounding, but since I always call him Kozou, I tell Ganza, "Don't know", and he gets really depressed. He must be dissatisfied for having the compounding equipments used by other people. He shuts up when I says to go tell master if he has complaints.

◇

I burn into my eyes the figures of master and Kozou forging the sword. They could be called twin existences, they match their breaths perfectly. Unbelievably, Kozou swings that great hammer for all night long without uttering even a whine. I can't let a humankin even touches the great hammer, but I allow it if it's this guy. My colleagues have the same opinion too.

Fairy sword.

The sword that Kozou swings is beautiful.
I will forge a sword exceeding that one someday. It's unreachable for the me now, but I'll show that I will surely reach it after several dozens of years.

Absolutely.

◇

Later, liquor from Kozou for master has arrived.
He's sent it with the barrels altogether, he sure knows dwarves. He's a heavy drinker that

beat master and me in drinking bout back then after all. I'd like to drink together again someday.

"Yo, Zajir. Is Dohar-shi around?"

I hear voice of a delicate man with an attitude. It's the eccentric Galhar who's opened a magic shop in the city above ground.

"Fun, there's no reason for you to not use honorifics for me. Call me Zajir-sama."
"Now now, Zajir-san. Don't talk like that to a childhood friend even as a joke."

The lovely Jojori shows her face behind Galhar. Childhood friend is a story of 30 years ago. It's a thing from several dozens years ago.

"Jojori, it's just like a child wanting to be glorified."
"Alright, I accept that challenge!"

I roll up my sleeves and am going to hit Galhar, but Jojori stop it with her body. Why, are you an ally of Galhar. She calls Galhar without honorific even though she uses "san" with me.

"Galhar, you too stop talking with biting words. Please get along."
"I know, Jojori."

Even though I get scolded by Jojori, when I see Galhar who's red like an octopus, I become wanting to hit him once.

"Wait Zajir-san, please don't use violence."

Dang, I unintentionally hit him.
My quarrel with Galhar continues until master comes back from a meal.

"What's this commotion. Do it outside if you want to make noise."
"Ara, grandfather."
"F, forgivme, master."

Fufun, he's been hit too many, he can't talk well. Serves you right.

"Wer' just playing arnd."

I just have a slight difficulty of talking today. It might even rain later.

◇

Thanks to Jojori-san who calls Don Haan siblings to cure us, both of us can talk now.
Galhar who rarely comes to the underground has come to invite us-which surprisingly include me too--to drink the liquor together-. He should have said so from the beginning. People who brings liquor with him is never bad people.

"This light green liquor is delicious."

"This crimson liquor is also sweetly easy to drink."

We can't have a banquet with just the shares that Galhar brings, so we take out the liquor barrels that Kozou has given to master.
As I'm told, it seems that the liquor Galhar brings is also from Kozou.

Why?

"Several barrels of liquor came together with a letter of gratitude. In the letter, along with gratitudes, he says that he's escaped death thanks to the goods that he's bought from me. I've opened the magic shop for 20 years, but this is the first time I've been thanked to this degree."

I heard that Galhar was forced to buy trash-like things when he went to the humankin city, but it seems he's doing a good work.

"Galhar, don't forget the feeling now. If you do that, you'll become the best dwarf magic merchant."
"That's right, Galhar. The best of gnome are Han and me though."
"That is so, Galhar. Aim to become the best among the dwarves. You'll always be second in this city though."

Even though master specially gives a good word to Galhar, the Don Haan siblings mix in.
It seems master has approved him, but I won't hand Jojori over. While battling for Jojori's line of sight from across, we gulp down the liquor
cups at the same time.

A good liquor with a nice woman, and a nice rival (friend), is good.
Next time, I want to have a banquet together with Kozou.

Intermission: Zena's Squad Disaster

Rio comes back from scouting bringing quite hopeless numbers. Furthermore, those are just small portions of the enemies.

We, the 24 people from Seryuu city labyrinth selected corps, are the core of the left wing unit that is made in hurry and comprises of 300 people consisting of civilians, farmers, and serfs. They're similarly frightened. It's natural to be so, they're forced to fight monsters that they usually never even see while not even having decent equipments.

"Hear me, everyone must survive! Don't think only on defeating the enemy and becoming a hero! You lot's lucks are good, we have elites that have survived fight with an upper demon and real dragons, not wyverns. There is no need to worry for things like small fry monsters or mid demons."

The Vice-Captain, sir Rilo encourages the ally. He's slightly overbearing, but it seems the grim faces are decreasing from the people. That's good.

I never imagined that we would get involved in this fight when we departed from Seryuu city.

◇

"We're doing well huh~, Zena-chi."
"That's right, Lilio."
"Lilio-san, nevermind when you're in private, but call her squad leader Zena during the march."
"Ho~i, Iona sure is stiff."

Iona-san scolds Lilio.
But, it's embarrassing to be formally called squad leader Zena.

It's been half a month since we get chosen into the selected labyrinth corps--abbreviation of labyrinth city Selbira training selected corps--after much hardships.
We should have departed on the beginning of spring, but due to the will of Earl-sama, it's been accelerated and the corps has departed. The captain and vice-captain might have decided to sortie when they hear that the season for departing has changed since the snow falls late this year.
The selected labyrinth corps consists of two knights squad with four knights and junior knights each, three magic squads with one magic soldier, two guards, one scout each, and then, one engineer squads. Beside those, there are two civil officials, and four servants.

There are 30 members in total, eight horse riders, and five carriages, maybe thanks to that sometimes thieves that can be seen on valleys or medium sized monsters attack, but they're no match against us who have been tempered in the Seryuu city underground labyrinth.

"By the way, Zena-chi."
"Yes?"

I answer cautiously. Whenever Lilio asks like this, it's always nothing good.
I receive the provision that Iona passes. They're black bread that's roasted to be hard as stone, and bean soup. Putting aside the taste, I'm happy with the warm soup. The magician, Rodril, who's been used as a substitute of firewoods is dissatisfied, but at a time like this, I'm jealous of people who can use fire magic.

"With how well we're going, shouldn't we catch up to him soon?"

I tried to keep my mind in peace, but I couldn't stop my twitching reaction.
What should I do? She would poke more if I answered with, "Catches up with whom?". I somehow don't want to answer with, "We're still far away."

"Catches up with whom."

When I was troubled with the reply, Ruu asked. Even though Iona-san was silent, mou, Ruu.
Look, Lilio is holding her laughter while having a really bad smile on her face.

"The boy of course."

Lilio calls Satou-san with boy. He certainly seems to be younger than us from his looks, but I think Lilio who has baby face herself shouldn't call him boy. It somehow sounds like a special nickname, I feel unpleasant to it. Is this jealousy?

"Boy?"
"It's about Zena-san's lover."

Iona answers Ruu's question.

It's not, he's not my lover yet.

Love story is a favorite of Iona-san, so it seems she can't endure it.
However, please stop talking with me as the joke material. It's painful, heartrending, and makes me feels uncertain.

The journey continues in this peaceful atmosphere for awhile, but it abruptly ends.

◇

"We're going to use traps for the ground enemies, and fight the airborne ones. We're not going to use bows for this. Zena, and Norina, drop them to the ground with wind magic, then the knight squads overrun them at once. I leave the others to vice-captain Rilo. Kill even one of them with all your power.
Zena, and Norina, after you use magic, immediately recover your magic power on the spot. Two squads concentrate on protecting them. Don't be lured and break out even by mistake."

Captain Derio tells everyone the strategy again.
It seems that the main vanguard unit of the monsters is going to clash with baron-sama unit. We can see the cloud of dust between the bushes and trees from here.

"Start the chants."

Vice-captain Rilo orders so since captain Derio's knight squad is departing. The voice is powerful, typical of a man.
Norina and I start the magic chantings. I chant [Fallen Hammer], and Norina chants [Turbulance]. Turbulance knocks down flying monsters to the ground, it's a tactic for certain victory against a wyvern.
The problem is there are too many enemies. Unlike Turbulance, Fallen Hammer's area of effect is narrow. It can only knocks down 10 monsters at most. I adjust my cane's angle in order to have the spell casted in the center of the flock.

"....■ Turbulance"
"....■■■ ■■■ Fallen Hammer"

I invoke the magic, slightly late from Norina. Alright, it's according to the aim.
We successfully swats down around 40 Tusk Horseflies to the ground. Right after, the captain and his squad overrun the tusk dragonflies from the flanks using wedge-shaped formations. Leaving aside when the tusk dragonflies are flying, they're slow on the ground, they become victims to the spears and hoofs.

"Whole unit, charge!"

By the order of vice-captain Rilo, all units beside Norina's and mine charge. In order to recover our magic power, we begin meditating on the spot. With the special breathing technique taught in the army, magic power recovers faster than usual. On the other hand, we're completely defenseless when we're meditating, so guards are necessary.
Lilio's crossbow, and Iona's greatsword intercept several tusk dragonflies and glutton dragonflies that are late. Since I'm fully absorbed in recovering behind Ruu's great shield, I don't see their activities.

It seems that we're the only one who fight relatively smoothly. At first, the right wing collapses, and as if trailing it, the center begins to collapse as well.
During this time, we're already fully occupied with repulsing the enemies before us, so we can't grasp the situation of our ally. Due to that, when the ally begins to retreat, we fall behind. Gradually, we get stuck with guarding the rear.

I unconsciously put my hand on the chest section of my leather armor.
A folded stole is there. My important amulet.

◇

"Is there something?"

There should be still some time until the break, but the carriages have stopped. Lilio who

has immediately gone to the front carriage to check comes back, we listen to the situation.

"We've met with the army of earl Lesseu."
"Since we're on earl Lesseu's territory, it's not strange to meet his army right?"
"The problem is, the one who call himself the earl is a boy."
"Isn't the earl supposed to be a man at his prime?"
"To make matter worse, they look like remnants of defeated army."

When we're chatting idly, the captain calls us.
The captain tells us that Lesseu city has been destroyed. It was an attack by a demon that had brought monsters along.

"Looks like the demon is level 40, an intermediate one. They say that there are 200 flying monsters, and 1200 ground monsters the demon brings."
"How strong are they?"
"The monsters are mostly a bit stronger than average soldiers, but there are some strong ones mixed in. The detail about the demon is unclear, but it seems it's a horse-headed demon strong at fire magic. It seems that the permanent army of Lesseu city has been annihilated from a surprise attack by the demon alone."

I'm confident that we can fight a lower demon even though we won't be able to win, but if it's an intermediate one, I don't think we have any chance of victory with the current force. Excluding captain Derio and the vice-captain who are at level 20s, everyone else is at level 10s. There is no magician that specialize in bombardment magic like in Seryuu city here. There are only three magic soldiers, including me, here. Our magic power capacities are low, so we can't do anything showy.

"The new earl Lesseu wants us to participate with the demon subjugation under the pretext of the [Blue Covenant]. We cannot turn this into scrap paper. The non-combatant should take refuge with the carriages in the nearby villages. It's probably safer than in the city."

The [Blue Covenant] that the captain talks about is the oldest covenant that has been passed over among the nobles since the founding of Shiga kingdom. The covenant is mainly about how the military has to cooperate together in case of demon attack. It's rarely put into work, if I'm not mistaken, the last time that happens is at marquis Muno's territory 20 years ago, before I'm born.

Just like this, we get included into the impromptu army at the second city of earl Lesseu's territory. The whole force consist of 800 regular soldiers, and 2000 militia. Even though it's twice the monster's number, the militia are just padded forces, it's certain that this will be a hard fight.

It'll be over if the demon attacks directly, but if we use the city's wall to make it into a siege war, then there's still a chance to win. Fortunately, there's an emergency communication magic tool in this city, so the information should have arrived at the neighboring cities.

We just have to wait for reinforcements now.

Everyone has thought so.
The next day, the young earl Lesseu has decided to fight the monsters on the field. The captains have tried to make him change his mind, but it's no good.

Satou-san. I might not be able to keep our promise of sending letters.

◇

"Zena-chi, are you alive?"
"Yes, Ruu has protected me."
"Hey, Lilio. Are you only worried about Zena."
"Ruu is the most heavily armed one right. Moreover, it's impossible for Iona to die."

My memory isn't clear. We should have been dealing with monsters on the rear.

"I'm glad that you trust me. The flash earlier must have been an advanced level tactical magic fired by the demon. We would have joined the deceased if there was no Zena-chi's defensive magic."

Everyone is pitch black covered with dust.
We've narrowly escaped deaths somehow, but the footsteps of the monsters are approaching. If we start moving, the demon in the sky would probably snipe with magic without mercy.

At that time.

The sky is divided, and that appears.

A ripple that looks like when a fish turn up on water surface floats and then, it appears in the sky. A beautiful silver ship. It's a ship right?

"The great me has arrived!"

A swordsman wearing blue armor shouts while standing on the tip of the ship without any support. Even the talkative Lilio can't follow this development, she's unable close her opened mouth.

That was the encounter with the Saga empire hero, sir Hayato.

That man holds overwhelming power that annihilates the intermediate demon with one swing of his holy sword, Arondight. Even the many monsters were destroyed by his ship--Dimensional Traveler Jules Verne--burned by the ship's beam.

We're saved.
If this miracle didn't happen, we would die in battlefield like the others.

I want to become stronger.

At least, in equal footing with the demon. For the shares of our fallen comrades too, we will

become stronger.

Next time, we will stand beside the one who creates the miracle!

Intermission: Pochi's Secret

Pochi will not forget.

That day, the day I'm given name.

◇

"Princess, we have come to escort you back."

Two dogkin men who wear silver clothes are standing while being bathed in moonlight. The kind-looking long-haired man talked to me.

"I do not have any intention to leave this planet."
"However, princess!"
"Please wait, Dober. First, let's hear the princess."
"However, Shiva!"

The long-haired man stopped the red-haired man who was pressing on me.

"Please tell us your reason. Is this savage planet more important than your home planet?"
"I have important companions here. And also, for the sake of the child in my stomach, I cannot leave this planet."

She pats the stomach that looks inconspicuous while she's sitting on the chair.

"That can't be, the miko of the great Ra Anubis to do something like having a child with the savage creature!"
"I, is that true princess?"

I nod at the two who are panicking.

◇

Pochi will not forget.

The taste of the first dried meat I eat. The happiness of grilled meat festival together with everyone.

Absolutely never forget.

◇

"Are you going no matter what?"
"Yes, I'm not the miko of Ra Anubis but Pochi Pendragon nano desu."

Yes, this place is important, along with that person.

As long as there are these two holy magic swords that he has forged, I can't let something like demon lord to keep doing as it pleases.

"We're also going together okay?"
"One for all~?"

Karina and Tama stand in my way when I'm about to depart.
We exchange high fives just like we've done in the battlefield a long time ago.

Now, let's board the world tree ship that Mia has prepared and embark toward hell!

Liza, please watch over us from beyond the star. We will surely take on your opponent.

◇

"Hou? I have died in it huh?"
"Au, don't look nodesu. Prohibited nano desu."

Liza saw the written story that I wrote together with Arisa nodesu.

"Even Pochi didn't want to have you died nodesu. But, but, Arisa is."
"Is that so, Pochi is laying the blame on Arisa huh."
"Au, au, I'm not nodesu, I'm not nodesu~"

When we were debating who was going to die, we did it inadvertently nodesu. I'm reflecting on it, so please forgive me nodesu.
I've prepared myself for the meat to disappear at the dinner tonight, but Liza properly puts it like usual nodesu.

Liza is gentle after all nodesu.

When the next story needs a killing, I'll have Arisa as the victim nodesu. Arisa will surely forgive me while laughing nodesu. She will right desu?

Intermission: Pochi and Picture Book

My favorite things are master and meat nano desu.

"Ara? Pochi hates me huh."

I'm not nodesu. I like Arisa too nano desu.

"Pochi hates Tama~?"
"Is that so, I am below meat huh."

Tama and Liza too, please wait nodesu.

"I see~ Pochi-chan likes meat more than everyone huh. It's unfortunate~ even though I've grilled a delicious steak."
"I express regret."
"Heartless."

Au, Lulu too, it's not like that nodesu. Nana and Mia too, please wait nodesu.
But, meat is delicious nodesu. So delicious it makes me happy nano desu.

"Then, Pochi doesn't need us right. Good bye Pochi."

It's not like that nodesu. Wait nano desu.

◇

"Please don't go~, nano desu!"
"Uwah, I'm surprised. What's wrong Pochi. Did you see a strange dream?"

When I look around restlessly, Tama is sleeping on top of master's lap.
Is this the camping ground?

I went to sleep when I was on night guard duty nodesu.

"Everyone was bullying me nodesu."
"That was just a dream. Everybody loves Pochi, so it's alright okay."

Master gently hugs Pochi and pats my head and back. It feels good nodesu. I almost sleep in because it feels too good nodesu.

Swoosh! I take a pose to get me spirited and wake me up nodesu. I'm a disgrace of a slave if I leave the night watch duty to master alone nodesu. I can see that Tama is sleeping on master's lap, but Tama is surely only pretending to be asleep nodesu. She surely is, nano desu.

"I won't feel sleepy with this nodesu."

"It's fine to sleep if you're sleepy you know?"
"I'm alright nano desu."

However, the [Aspalegus Meat Roll] that we've eaten just now is too delicious, it's no good nodesu. Happiness with full stomach--

Ha!? Critically dangerous nodesu. I almost dozed off involuntarily nodesu.
Arisa has said this, full stomach is the strongest enemy of drowsiness, she says.

It's reading time for a time like this nano desu.

"Master, I'd like you to read the picture book please nodesu."
"Nn? The picture book that Arisa's bought from the secondhand store huh? Hasn't Pochi become able to read now?"

This and that are different matters nodesu. It's essential for master to read it for me nano desu.

"Then, let's read it together."
"Yes, nano desu!"

■————————

A loo~ng, long time ago.
The seven gods came here together with the world trees from the world of gods.

The gods planted the world trees on the earth, and taught everyone knowledges and words.

And then, everyone lived together in happiness, happily ever after.

————————■

"Not that nodesu, the story is not like that nodesu."

Master is not serious nano desu. I should protest firmly here nano desu.
Even though Pochi is hitting master softly, master only laughs without complaining that it hurts nodesu.
The master today is mean nano desu.

"I give, I give~ I'm going to read it properly, so forgive me."
"Being mean is no good nano desu. The next one is the last chance nano desu."
"Understood. I'll read it properly alright."

■————————

The people lived peacefully and prospered greatly at the feet of the eight world trees.
However, since when was it. There are nine gods in the world.

The eighth god is the god of dragon.

The god of dragon had been in the world before the seven gods came together with the world trees.
The god of dragon was a sleepyhead, it was sleeping even until the world had completely changed.

The god of dragon was very surprised when it finally woke up, but since it was a foolish god who didn't fuss over small things, it approved the agreeable seven gods and got along with them.

However, the ninth god was different.

————————■

"Master, why does it use [Hashira] instead of [Hito] nano desu?"
"I wonder? We learn to do it like that. Birds use [Hane], rats use [Hiki] right? Different counters are used for different objects."

As expected of master nano desu. I don't really understand, but I feel like I've understood nodesu.

"Thank you nano desu. Please read the continuation nodesu."

When I push the picture book to master, he says [Ow, ow] and laughs. When I see master's smile, I feel happy nodesu.

■————————

The ninth god was a demon god that had traveled from another world.
The demon god was really spoiled, it couldn't stand not being the best, and always tried to pick a fight with the other gods.

It couldn't be helped that the demon god became envious when it saw the other gods were surrounded by various people and mythical beasts.
The demon god created demons to have them revere itself. The demons and their creator, the demon god, bullied the other races around.

The troubled gods protested to the demons and demon god to not act violently, but they were completely ignored.

Too bad so sad, and then, the world was destroyed.

————————■

"Mou, master is a bully nodesu. Not reading the picture book properly, bad, nano desu."

Even though I'm scolding master, he's giggling.
Is he really repenting desu?

"I am repenting, I'll read it properly this time."

"You have to absolutely nano desu. Let's do pinky promise nodesu."

We link our little finger and make a pinky promise nodesu.
Master's finger is slender and beautiful nodesu.

I'll boast it to Arisa later nodesu.

■————————

One day, a tragedy occured.
The demons that had gone wild laid their hands on the dragons and the dragon god who were sleeping. The dragons who got their pleasant sleeps disturbed violently raged, every demon were burned by the breath of the dragons.
And unfortunately, at the same time, the other races were also burned together.

The demon god was also chased by the dragon god, but the demon god who was quick at running away continued to elude the dragon god for 100 years, and finally, the dragon god got tired and went back to the dragon valley.

The gods said to the dragon god that it was too excessive, but the dragon god who was half-asleep swung its tail once and blew away the gods to beyond the mountains.

Ever since that time, the demons never approach the dragons, and bully the weaker ones stealthily.

The weakest and most bullied one, the human race, asked the young goddess for the power to fight against the demon.

The young goddess was very troubled.
That is because the young goddess didn't have power to fight. The troubled young goddess consulted with the other gods, but every one of them only nods their heads while uh-huh-ing without trying to do anything.

The young goddess went to consult the strongest one, the dragon god. Of course, she couldn't borrow the power of the dragons. If she did that, the damage would be greater than letting the demons going wild.

At first the dragon god was unwilling to help, but since it liked the human toys and liquor that the young goddess had brought, the dragon god taught her one magic.

That was the magic to summon a hero.

It was the magic of hope.

————————■

"Pochi also wants to be summoned nodesu! And then I'll become a hero nodesu!"
"That's right, if it's Pochi, she will become a hero someday."

Muu, master answered vainly nodesu.
Pochi knows nodesu.

Not good desu. Truly not good nodesu.

Master has closed the pattern and the picture book nodesu.

No nano desu!
After this, it'll be the part about the hero's heroic tales nano desu.
I protest by clinging on master's neck, and look up at master's face, but master isn't looking here nodesu. Master? Pochi is over here nano desu.

"Good morning, master."
"Good morning, Lulu. Liza and Nana are tired from the special training yesterday, so let them keep sleeping, I'll help with the breakfast today. Pochi, do you have any request?"

Meal from master!
That is the essential wonder nano desu.

I don't have to think for the re-quest nodesu.

"Meat!"

When I declare so vigorously, master laughs nodesu.

Today is also a really good day nano desu!

Intermission: The Agony of a Transported Person

I thought I could do anything alone.

Who made me the meal, who gave me games and phones, I didn't appreciate those kind of things, thinking that they were givens.

I wonder, was that why?

I was different than the classmates around me. I had come to think so without any ground.
Of course, I felt that exerting effort was uncool, so I did nothing but raising my gaming skill. Flaming on bulletin boards behind anonymity was also my specialty.

Maybe because no one wanted to associate with such a person, far from friends, my own families were even distancing themselves from me. Mysteriously, I didn't get bullied.

For those reasons, I started playing wish-fulfillments galge, and got into things where the protagonists were unparalleled or reincarnated.
Particularly the reincarnation plot, I collected various knowledges from the net to prepare for when I got summoned someday. After copying the collected informations, I wrote it down on a notebook. Since electricity might not exist on the world where I'd get transported. I filled the notebook with a lot of those knowledge in messy writings.

Come now, princess of a different world. I'm okay with getting summoned anytime!

Mouth is the origin of misfortune. These words come home to me these days.

◇

It suddenly becomes dark, and I'm inside a room made from bricks.
Oy, oy, where the heck is this?

Not. Of course I know. Obviously.

The room is dim, and the lights from candles are flickering. They're not light from magic.
Oops, I shouldn't forget about my favorite reincarnation works. First, I have to observe [People]. I frantically keep my eyes on the faces of the people here. Who are my allies, who are in agreement with the summoning, and against it. Observing them. Right now, that's the only thing I can do. That's why I'm observing.

There are three women who wear miko-like clothes, and six men who looks like soldiers. The other people are two civil officials-like old men, and a sly glasses-wearing good-looking guy, he's an enemy. It's decided.
Ack, a weasel is standing upright and talking about something. Beastman should just have different ears and tail. I'm okay with paws too.

My people observation is forced to stop.

"●●●●、●●●. ●●●●●●●●●"

When that person is talking, my cool style instantly evaporates.

Oh, geezuz!

My head becomes blank, I can't think of anything. I can only stare at that woman wholeheartedly. It might be some kind of magic attack or mind attack.

But, whatever.

Right now, staring at her is justice.

A maid-looking woman is giving me something.
You, outta the way. Get away. Look, you're hiding her hair. She pushes me something on my hand, but as long as she's not obstructing the view, that's fine.

"Do you understand what I'm saying?"

I do, but so what?
Is there any meaning to that for enjoying her beauty.

"What should we do your highness. The translation ring might be malfunctioning."
"My, that's troubling. What should we do?"

The beauty's troubled face also looks beautiful.
I want to see more expressions on her face.

"Your highness, the result from the Yamato stone that he's touched earlier has come out."
"And it is?"
"He's like the two before. He has an unusual『Burying』skill, but there's no unique skill."
"Does it match the kingdom's interest?"
"Unfortunately...."
"Is that so."

I heard something bad. What the heck is "The two before". Am I the third one? I shouldn't say, "It's because I'm probably the third" right? Furthermore, what is kingdom's interest? What's with that remark when you've gone and kidnapped people without permission.

Just like how a young man usually react, I'm also boiling in anger for a moment.
However, that was poured with cold water due to the existence of the guarding soldiers. The swords on their waist and the spears look real.

If I'm to attack, now is not the time.
This is a composed investigation. It's not because I'm scared of the soldiers' swords at all. It's also not because the glances from the soldiers are saying as if they'll kill me if I move. It's

the result of a cool investigation through and through. I'm going coolly. Coolly.

I keep staring at the violet-haired woman. She's too beautiful it's hard to live. I wonder how old is she? She looks like a high schooler, but she's probably older right? I want to tell her that her twin-tail will look good tied with thin ribbons, but the soldiers' glances are scary. It feels like they'd slay me for rudeness without warning.

◇

In the end, the kidnapper lots treat me as if I'm air the whole time, and a maid escorted by two soldiers guides me to a three tatami-wide small room. The room is only lit by one candle on a candlestick.

"The person in charge of training you will come tomorrow morning, wait here. I'll bring you something to eat later, so be quiet okay?"

A maid of around 20 years old talks to me condescendingly and leaves.

It's probably going to be black bread and lightly salted soup right?
I want to see her bringing imperial court cooking.

When I see the dish that the maid's brought, I regret the curse that I've said in mind earlier.

Don't make fun of me fantasy.

What the heck is dinner with one potato! Moreover it's raw! You're killing my stomach!

Since I can still feel that there are guards outside the room, I swallow my complaints. The maid seems to misunderstand it.

"Ara? Are you really that hungry? I'll prepare another one for the breakfast tomorrow, so you can eat that whole. You don't need to hold back."

The girl said so without sarcasm, put a water jug on the side table and left. Oy, oy, there's no cup here.

I'm not hungry enough to eat a raw potato, so I drink the water directly from the jug to quench my throat.
My mouth longs for something, so I throw a candy that I've always readied in my pocket inside it. Other things that I've brought are a swiss army knife, the three candies that are the most important, and a notebook written with cheat about administration.

After getting some sugar supplies, I'm able to think this a bit more carefully.

First, let's check if cheats dwell in my body.

By simply doing push-up. I'm downed before the tenth just like usual. I don't have a body reinforcement cheat.

I take out the swiss army knife, imagine a virtual goblin and swing the knife. I feel empty in the middle of doing it, I don't have a swordsmanship or martial arts cheat either.

There should be magic at least, since I was summoned after all. My last hope, I try magic cheat. Imagine it. I imagine flame and put my hands toward the desk.

It's cold. My heart is cold.

This is a world without magic huh. I've decided so.

That means, I stay like what I've always been. Summoning magic, do your work.

Fuhn, there is no apology from the god, and I begin to vaguely notice. Reality is different than delusion. I am allowed to despair for a bit right? I'm already tired. I'm sleepy.

◇

When I notice a certain thing, I immediately stand up.
That's right, this is a hard mode world. It might be a cripplingly very hard world even. It's still too early to rest.

I investigate the informations that I've got in hands.

I got summoned. The summoner is probably that girl.

They call the violet twin-tail beauty your highness, she's probably a royalty.

Who were the "Two before" that the sly-glasses mentioned. Were they summoned people like me?

I recall the look on the soldiers' eyes. Those guys were obviously wary of me. That means, the previously mentioned two summoned people have done something bad. They couldn't have hugged that beauty right.

No, the thing they were wary about was not that kind of thing.

That's right, it's [Skill]. Those guys unmistakably said that. They said that I have skill. It was [Burying] wasn't it? It's really like me, sweats will come out of my eyes.

How do I use it?
I recite Burying inside my heart. I somehow feel like my presence becomes thinner. Wait, isn't it just like always.

While becoming slightly sad, I get out of the room.
I've thought that there's a sentry, but there's no one outside the room.

If I didn't think like a child and went to explore the castle here, my future might have been slightly different.

However, there is no IF in reality. You can only choose once.

And then I've heard it.

I have heard it.

The two summoned people before me were deemed to be unsuitable for heroes and executed. The maids and soldiers talk about it without having any sense of guilt.

That's bullshit!

After you've abducted them like that. If they're unnecessary, send them back to their world.

◇

Unable to go back to my room, I wander around the castle and meet a girl.
I try to block her mouth in a hurry, but get pinned down by her self-defense-like moves instead.

She's strong, belying her delicate look. Why did I use polite speech.

"Keep quiet. The soldiers will come if you're noisy. You're the person from the different world that Yuriko-sama has summoned today right?"

The girl is called Menea, a princess of this kingdom. I'm told that Yuriko is the violet-haired twintail beauty, her aunt. Eternally 17 years old huh. I understand.

In exchange for some informations, I got informations out of her.
I shouldn't have heard it. There is no method to return to my original world. Are they calling and leaving huhh.

When we talk about the fate of the two summoned people before me, she becomes upset. It seems that she spent some times with the two on the city outside the castle.

I desperately try to get her sympathy, and ask about the ways to get out of the castle. It has been since the examination for high school that I try so hard like this.

I got fruits and jeweled ring for trading with money from her. Since she doesn't seem like she's directly involved with the kidnapping, I want to repay the favor, so I give her two pages of the administrative cheat from the notebook. I've memorized the content of those pages. Don't belittle a student with free time.

◇

I light the torch that I've got from Menea with a lighter.
Even though I've been suspected of smoking by the teacher, and questioned by patrolling police and other doubts because of this, I keep carrying it.

I'll use [Burying] until I arrive at the town at night.

Fufufu, I'll register at the adventure guild in the town, and seize my success story from there on. Different world dream, come on.

I don't hear the sounds of insects.

I know.
This is not an easy mode world. It's a crazy hard real different world. Of course, there are monsters too.

However, seriously spare me from getting attacked by a praying mantis the size of a human being.

I desperately run away, but I've not thought that running on the mountain at night would be this hard. I couldn't even run away for several meters and got caught. My left arm is bitten off in one gulp. It's hot rather than painful. I wonder if my adrenaline is pumped in tons, I don't feel much pain.

Ah, game over huh.
Even if I want to counter attack, I've dropped my torch somewhere.

The monster deliciously eats the left arm that's been torn off me. Even though I want to run, the monster pins down its leg on top of my stomach, so I can't move.
Ah, I'm bleeding too much.

My consciousness becomes hazy.
I hear a clamor in the end. I don't understand what they're saying. Oh right, I've put the translation ring on the finger of my left hand.

The last thing that I see is a dark brown skin with long ears.
It's here, a dark elf in flesh.

I've thought that my life is a kusoge, but I see something good in the end.
I wanted to TUEE with a dark elf serving me.

I will become black knight the next time I'm reborn....

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Translated by Sousetsuka